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THE HOPES
OF
THE CHURCH OF GOD,
IN CONNECTION WITH
THE DESTINY OF THE JEWS AND
THE NATIONS.
AS REVEALED IN PROPHECY.

ELEVEN LECTURES DELIVERED IN GENEVA, 1840

By J. N. D.

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THE HOPES OF THE CHURCH OF GOD.

LECTURE I.

READ 2 PETER I.

INTRODUCTION.

It should be the endeavour of the Christian, not only to be assured of his salvation in Christ, but also of all the results of this salvation. He should not only know that he is in his Father's house, but enjoy the privileges of his happy position. "God has called us by glory and by virtue." (2 Pet. i. 3.)

In the glory of Christ and of the Church, God has given us a futurity full of His own designs, the present study of which fills our hearts full of associations with Him; and this assuredly is one of His objects in dispensing prophecy to us; He reveals it to us as His friends (John xv. 15; Eph. i. 9), making us participators of the thoughts which occupy Himself. He could not give us a more tender pledge of His love and confidence (Gen. xviii. 17), nor anything having a holier tendency as regards ourselves. In fact if men are to be known by the ends they are pursuing, our conduct in the present life will have the impress and bearing of that futurity which we are expecting; our life *here* will be coloured by the foretaste of things *there*. Those whose ambition is dignity and power, those who dream

only of riches, those who have no other aim than the pleasures of this world, act according to that which is in their hearts; their habits bear the mark of what they are longing for. So it is in the Church. If the faithful understood *their* calling, which is no less than participation in a coming heavenly glory, what would be the consequence? Nothing less than to live here as strangers and pilgrims. In distinguishing the prophecies which relate to this earth, they would better understand the nature of the earthly promises made to the Jews, and would learn to separate them from those which refer to us Gentiles; they would judge the spirit of the age, and would preserve their hearts from being engrossed by human objects, and from many a care and distraction hurtful to the life of a Christian: they would exercise a happy dependence upon Him who has ordered all things and who "knows the end from the beginning," and would yield themselves entirely to that hope which has been given them, and to the discharge of those duties which flow from it.

It has been said, that the real use to be made of the prophecies is, to shew the divinity of the Bible by those which have already been accomplished. This is certainly a use which may be made of them, but this is not the special object for which they have been given. They belong not to the world, but to the Church or remnant, to communicate the intentions of God to that Church or remnant, and to be its guide and torch before the arrival of those events which they predict, or during their accomplishment. Shall we use the revelations of God merely as the means of convincing us afterwards that He has told the truth? It is as if some one were

treating me as his intimate friend, heaping benefits upon me, communicating his thoughts to me, telling me all that he knew would shortly happen ; and I should use all his confidence for no other purpose than to convince myself, when everything had come to pass, that he was a truth-telling person.* Alas ! alas ! where are we ? Have we so far lost the feeling of our privileges, and of the goodness of our God ? Is there, then, nothing for the Church in all these holy revelations ? for certainly it is not the Church's place to be discussing whether God, its divine Friend, has told the truth. Dear friends, we wrong the goodness and friendship of God in acting thus towards Him. As Christians, we have no need to be witnesses of an event, in order to believe what God says to be true—that His word is true. You believe already that prophecy is the word of God.

But more than this. The greater part of the prophecies, and in a certain sense, we may say all the prophecies, will have their accomplishment at the expiration of the dispensation in which we are. Now, at that epoch it will be too late to be convinced of their truth, or to employ them for the conviction of others ; the terrible judgment which will come upon those who disbelieve

* As Satan is watchful to take advantage of every part of scripture not used to a right end, he has not been unmindful of the above argument ; he has therefore led many to suppose a partial fulfilment of many of the prophecies to be their complete accomplishment. An undue prominency has been given by many commentators to little events, owing to the scope of prophecy not being understood in its utility to the present wants of the soul, or ultimately to those who in the midst of Israel wait for redemption in Zion.

them will be sufficient demonstration of their truth. No ; they are given to us to direct us in our present walk in the ways of the Lord, and to be our comfort in enabling us to see that it is God who disposes of all events, and not man. They are as a light shining in a dark place. Thus, the passions, instead of being let loose in the world of politics, are quieted. I observe what God has said—I read in Daniel that all is ordered from the beginning, and I am tranquil. Altogether separated from these worldly things, I can study beforehand the profound and perfect wisdom of God ; I get enlightened, and cleave to Him instead of following my own understanding. I see in the events which take place around me the unfolding of the purpose of the Most High, and not a field abandoned to the struggle of human passions. Thus, and specially in the events which come to pass at the end, it is, that prophecy opens out to us the character of God—all that God would have us know of Himself—His faithfulness, His justice, His power, His longsuffering, but at the same time the judgment which He will certainly execute on proud iniquity, the public and fearful vengeance which He will take on those who corrupt the earth—in order that His government may be established in peace and blessing for all.

Where was the use of the Lord forewarning the disciples that they were to flee under such and such circumstances, if they did not understand what He was speaking about, and did not believe beforehand in the truth of His word ? It was precisely this knowledge and this faith that distinguished them from all their unbelieving countrymen. It is just so with the Church.

The judgment of God is to come upon the nations ; the Church is informed of this ; and, thanks to the teaching of the Holy Spirit, understands it, believes it, and escapes the things which are coming.

But, says another objector, these prophetic studies are merely speculative. Oh ! what a device of Satan is this ! If looking beyond the present, beyond the feeling of my own wants, if passing beyond the domain of material being, I launch into futurity—everything will be vague and uninfluential, unless I fill it—with my own thoughts ; now these are real speculations ; or with the thoughts of God ; what are these ? It is prophecy which reveals and developes them ; for prophecy is the revelation of the thoughts and counsels of God as to things to come. Where is the man bearing the name of Christian, who does not rejoice in the prospect that “ the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea ? ” This is a prophecy. If it be asked, How is this to be accomplished ? it is not from man’s mouth that the answer is to come : the word of the same prophecy will tell us, and thus silence the imaginations and the vainglory of our proud hearts.

In truth, although communion with God comforts and sanctifies us, and this communion, which is to be eternal, is already given to us, yet He wishes to act upon our hearts by positive hopes. Necessarily then He must communicate the subject of them to us, in order that they may have an efficacious influence, and so prevent these hopes being either vague, or the result of ingeniously contrived fables. Thanks be to the God of all grace and goodness, our futurity is neither the one nor the other. The fulness of the details of the coming glory are still the subject of

LECTURE II.

READ EPHESIANS I.

THE CHURCH AND ITS GLORY.

OF the three objects which have been mentioned in the first lecture as about to form the subject of our study, that of the Church and its glory is to have the first place. It introduces us to the name of Father, the character in which God has revealed Himself to us, and whence flow to the Church the fruits of grace, and all the circumstances of its state of glory, as everything flowed to Israel from the name of Jehovah. To this name of Father, however, is to be added another relationship, distinctly marked in the Epistle to the Ephesians, and closely allied to the principal one, namely, that the Father has given the Church to Christ as His bride, so that it will fully participate in all His glory. In adopting us for His children, the Father has associated us with the dignities and glory of the Son, "firstborn among many brethren." (Rom. viii. 29.) As the bride of Jesus, we enjoy, in virtue of His incomparable love to us, all the privileges that belong to Him.

"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand." (John iii. 35.) This is the first great truth we desire to set out from. And as the Son has glorified the Father, so the Father will glorify the Son.

Our second point is: we shall participate in the glory of the Son; as it is said in John xvii. 22: "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them;" and it

is in order that the world may know that the Father loves us as He loves Jesus Himself. In seeing us in the same glory, the world will be convinced that we are the objects of the same love; and the glory which we shall have at the last day will be but the manifestation of this precious and astonishing truth.

Thus the hope of the Church is not alone salvation, that is, to escape the wrath of God, but to have the glory of the Son Himself.

That in which the perfection of its joy consists is the being loved by the Father, and by Jesus; and, in consequence of this love, the being glorified. But more than this, the Father would have us enter into the full intelligence of these riches, and has even given us the firstfruits by the presence of the Holy Ghost in all those who are saved.

Before we follow up these thoughts by other testimonies from the word of God, let us look into the chapter before us.

In the very first lines, God presents Himself as a Father, and in the relationships already indicated.

He is "*our Father*" (ver. 2), and "*the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" (Ver. 3.)

From this until verse 8 the apostle expounds salvation. God "has made us accepted in the beloved"—this "to the praise of the glory of his *grace*," in God's presence, in conformity to His nature, and adopted as children to the Father. We have redemption through His blood. This is according to the riches of His grace.

From verse 8 to 10, we see that this grace of salvation introduces us by its actual power, by the Holy Spirit, into the knowledge of the proposed purpose or decree of

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God as to the glory of Christ; a touching proof, as we have before remarked, of the love of God who treats us as His friends, and tranquillizes our souls, in an ineffable manner, in making us see the termination of all the efforts and all the agitation of the men of this world.

The decreed purpose of God is this: "God will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth."

Until verse 8, we have seen our predestination to the state of children of the Father, and the actual accomplishment of salvation. "*We have redemption through his blood.*" In that which follows, we have the purpose of God, as to the glory of Christ, in relation with all things; afterwards, from verse 11, our participation, yet future, in the glory thus designated; and, further, the sealing of the Holy Spirit whilst we are waiting in expectation of this glory. "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance . . . that we should be to the praise of his glory." Previous to verse 8, it had been "to the praise of the glory of his grace." Now it is "to the praise of his glory;" and then, "after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our *inheritance until the redemption* of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." The remainder of the chapter is a prayer of the apostle, that the faithful may understand their hope, and that the power of the resurrection and of the exaltation of Christ, to whom the Church is united, may be accomplished in them, a power which works towards them as believers.

This position of the Church, which enjoys its own redemption, and which waits for the redemption of the

inheritance, has its perfect type in Israel. This people, redeemed from Egypt, did not enter at once into Canaan, but into the wilderness, whilst the land itself remained still in the possession of the Canaanites. The redemption of Israel was finished, the redemption of the inheritance was not. The heirs were redeemed, but the inheritance was not yet delivered out of the hands of the enemy. "Now all these things," says the apostle (1 Cor. x. 11), "happened unto them" [the Israelites] "for types, and they are written for our admonition" [the Church], "upon whom the ends of the world are come."

Christ is waiting for the resurrection of the Church, in order that everything may be subjected to Him; subjected, not of right only, but in fact. He is waiting for that solemn moment when Jehovah will make all His enemies as a footstool under His feet. (Ps. cx. 1.) Until that moment arrives, kept as a secret in the depth of the divine counsels,* He is sitting on the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Heb. i. 3.)

* It is perhaps for this reason that it is said in Mark xiii. that the Son Himself knoweth not the day nor the hour, because He Himself was the object of this decree of Jehovah. He will receive everything from the hand of God, as man and servant, as also God has now highly exalted Him. (Phil. ii. 9.) Speaking as a prophet, Christ announced His coming as the terrible judgment which was to fall upon an unbelieving nation; but the counsel of God as to this judgment, or at least as to the moment of its approach, was contained in those words, "Sit thou at my right hand *until*" Christ as a servant waited (as always, and this was His perfection) upon the will of His Father, and to receive the kingdom when the Father would have it so. It is worthy of remark that Psalm cx. and Mark xiii. refer exactly to the same subject. The enemies are the Jews who rejected Him. Luke xix. 27.)

Christ will take the inheritance of all things as a man, in order that the Church, bought with His blood, may inherit all things with Him, purified co-heir of an inheritance which will be itself purified.

Let us keep in mind, then, these two fundamental points:—

First, Christ, in the counsels of God, possesseth all things.

Secondly, In virtue of being the bride of Christ, the Church participates in all that He has, and in all that He is, except His eternal divinity, although in a sense we do participate in the divine nature.

Let us look through the passages which furnish the thoughts we have been giving out.

All things, we say, are for Christ.

He is “appointed heir of all things.” (Heb. i. 2.) They belong to Him of right, because He is their Creator. (Col. i. 15–18.) Observe, in this passage, two headships of Christ; first of all He is called “first-born [or chief] of every creature;” then, “firstborn from the dead,” “the head of the body, the Church;” a distinction which throws much light on our subject. “All things were created by him, and for him.” Moreover, He will possess them as man, as Second Adam, to whom God has intended in His counsels to subject them.

It is thus that we read in Psalm viii., which is applied to Christ by St. Paul (Heb. ii. 6), and is, in fact, the corner stone of the doctrine of the apostle upon this subject. He cites the psalm three times in his epistles, in passages, the leading thoughts of which are the subjection of all things to the man Christ under three

different aspects, every one of which is important for us.

According to Hebrews ii. 6, the prophecy is not yet accomplished, but the Church has, in the partial accomplishment of that which is yet to come, the pledge of its final consummation. All things are not yet put in subjection to Jesus; but, in the meantime, Jesus is already crowned with glory and honour—certain proof that what remains will have its fulfilment in due time.

Under the present dispensation (the object of which is the gathering together of the co-heirs) all things are not subjected to Him; but He is glorified, and His followers acknowledge His rights. In Hebrews ii., then, we have the application of Psalm viii. 5, 6, and we are informed that the subjection of all things to the Second Adam has not yet taken place.

In Ephesians i. 20, 13, we equally see Jesus exalted, highly exalted, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and the putting of all things under His feet is also offered to our attention; but as the effect of this is the introduction of the Church into the same glory, Jesus is presented to us, in this glory, as the Head of the Church, His body, “the fulness of him that filleth all in all”—the other truth upon which we have been insisting.

Again, in 1 Corinthians xv., this same fact, the glorification of Jesus, and the subjection of all things to Him, is shewn to us, but still in another point of view, that is, as about to take place at the resurrection, according to the power of which Jesus has been declared the Second Adam, and withal head of a kingdom which He will possess as man, and which He will eventually deliver up to

God the Father, whilst He Himself, as Second Adam, is to be "subject unto him that put all things under him," instead of reigning as man, as He had been doing, over all things—all things, we say, except over Him who will have subjected them to Him.

The truth, then, which we have presented, besides the proper joy of being with Him and like Him and in the Father's presence, is, a subjection yet to come of all things to Christ, a reign which He will share with the Church, inasmuch as this is His body, and which will take place therefore at the resurrection of this same body, and a power which He will afterwards resign to God the Father, at some decreed time, in order that God may be all in all.

Christ, glorified in His person now, and whilst the Church is gathering, is sitting upon the throne of God, waiting until it be complete; until, in short, the time be come for His being invested with His royal power, and that Jehovah shall have put His enemies as a footstool under His feet.

An important distinction results from the passages we have been citing: it is this, that besides the reconciliation of the Church, there is the reconciliation of all things. You may have perceived this in the chapter, with the reading of which the lecture began: we saw that the proposed intention of God was to gather all things in Christ; that the reconciliation of the Church is represented, in the verses which precede verse 8, as a thing accomplished, and the glory as a thing future, of which we have as yet but the earnest in the presence of the Holy Spirit in us after having believed. But we see in Romans viii. 19–23 that the deliverance of creation will

take place at the time of the manifestation of the sons of God. As to the present, that is, the time during which Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, everything is in a state of misery, the whole creation remains in the bondage of corruption. It is true that we are redeemed, and that even the price for the redemption of creation has been given; and more than this, we have received the first-fruits of the Spirit as earnest of the glory. But all this is but our expecting state, until the Most High enters upon the exercise of His power, until He reigns, and becomes possessor in fact, as He is by right, of the heavens and the earth. Inhabiting in our bodies a fallen creation, whilst indeed by the Spirit we are united to Christ, we have, on the one hand, the assurance of being children "accepted in the beloved," and the joy of the hope of the inheritance by the Spirit which is the earnest of it; but, upon the other hand, by the same Spirit, we give utterance, inasmuch as we are in the body, to the sighs and groanings of the creation, being participators therein owing to this body of death. All is in disorder; but we know Him who has redeemed us and made us heirs of all things, and who has introduced us into the enjoyment of the love of the Father: we enjoy these privileges; but, understanding also the blessings which will be shed upon the inheritance, when Christ shall take it and we shall appear with Him in glory, perceiving likewise the miserable state in which the scene of His future dominion actually is, we serve, by the Spirit, as a channel to those sighs which go up to the throne of the God of mercy.

The passage already cited from the Epistle to the Colossians accurately establishes this distinction. It is

said (ver. 20), "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you . . . [the saints] now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death." The Church is already reconciled. The things of earth and heaven will be reconciled later, by the efficacy of His blood already shed.* The order of the ceremonies on the great day of atonement explained this reconciliation typically, though in special reference, as to details, to the part which the Jews will have in these blessings.

In Colossians i. 16, we clearly see what are the things which are comprehended in this reconciliation: "All things were created by him, and for him." All that He has created as God, He will inherit as the restorer of all things. Were there, for example, a blade of grass that was not subjected to His power in blessing, Satan would have got an advantage over Christ, over His rights, and over His inheritance. Now it is the judgment which will vindicate all the righteous title of Christ.

Besides all this, Christ, when He comes, will be the source of joy to all created intelligences, joy reflected and elevated by the blessing which will be spread over the whole creation; for the joy of witnessing the happiness of others, and also that which flows down in the freeing of creation from the servitude of corruption, is a divine part of our enjoyments; we partake it with the God of all goodness.

* It must be carefully attended to, that it is a question here of things, and in heaven and earth, and in no way of sinners remaining in their unbelief, who are in neither.

As to us, it is in the "heavenly places" that we shall find our abode. The spiritual blessings in heavenly places which we enjoy even now in hope, and hindered in many ways, will be for us, in that day, things natural, our physical and normal state, so to speak; but the earth will not fail to feel the effects of it. "Wicked spirits in heavenly places" (see margin Eph. vi. 12), whose place will be then filled by Christ and His Church, will cease to be the continual and prolific causes of the misery of a world subjected to their power by sin. The church, on the contrary, with Christ, reflecting the glory in which she participates, and enjoying the presence of Him who is at once to her its source and fulness, will beam upon the earth in blessing; and the nations of those who are saved will walk in her light. "Help meet for him" in His glory, full of thoughts of her beloved, and enjoying His love, she will be the worthy and happy instrument of His blessings; whilst, in her condition, she will be the living demonstration of their success. For God has done these things, "that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus." (Eph. ii. 7.) The earth will enjoy the fruits of the victory and of the faithfulness of the Second Adam, and will be the magnificent testimony of it in the sight of principalities and powers, as it is at present, in the chaos made by sin, of the ruin and of the iniquity of the first Adam. Without doubt, the crowning joy—the joy of joys—will be the communion of the Father and of the Bridegroom; but to be witness of His goodness, to have part in it, and to be an instrument of it towards a fallen world, will certainly be to taste of divine joys, for "God is love."

Dear friends, it is this earth that we inhabit that God has taken to make the scene for the manifestation of His character and His works of grace. This earth is the place where sin has entered and fixed its residence ; it is here that Satan has displayed his energy for evil ; it is here that the Son of God has been in humiliation, has died, and has risen ; it is upon this earth that sin and grace have both done their wonders ; it is upon this earth that sin has abounded, if, notwithstanding, grace has much more abounded. If now Christ is hid in the heavens, it is upon this earth He will be revealed ; it is here that the angels have best penetrated the depths of the love of God ; it is here, also, that they will comprehend its results, manifested in glory ; upon this earth, where the Son of man has been in humiliation, the Son of man shall be glorified. If this earth in itself is but a small thing, that which God has done upon it, and will do, is not a small thing for Him. For us (the Church), the heavenly places are the city of our habitation, for we are co-heirs, not the inheritance,—we are heirs with God and joint-heirs with Christ ; but the inheritance is necessary for the glory of Christ, as the co-heirs are the object of His most tender love, His brethren, His bride.

I have, then, detailed to you, dear friends, briefly and feebly, as I am well aware, what is the destiny of the Church. The Spirit can alone make us feel all the sweetness of the communion of the love of God, and the excellence of the glory which is given to us. But, at least, I have pointed out passages enough in the word to make you understand—with the help of the Holy Spirit, which I implore for you all—the thoughts which

I had on my heart to tell you to-night. It results clearly enough that we live under the dispensation during which the heirs are gathered together, and that there is another which will take its place at the coming of the Saviour,—that in which the heirs shall have the enjoyment of the inheritance of all things,—that in which all things shall be subjected to Christ, and to His Church, as united to Him and manifested with Him. What is to follow ulterior to that is not our business now: I mean that last period, when God will be all in all, and when Christ Himself, as man, will be subject to God; and chief, as man, of a family eternally blessed in the communion of God, who has loved that family, and whose tabernacle will be in the midst of it—God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, eternally blessed. Amen.

It is in occupying herself with these subjects, full of hope by the Spirit, that the Church will be detached from the world, and will clothe herself with the character which becomes her as the affianced bride of Christ, to whom she owes all her heart and all her thoughts.

LECTURE III.

READ ACTS I.

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

THIS evening I am going to speak of the coming of Christ. Many questions link themselves with this great one, as for instance, the reign of Antichrist. But I shall limit myself this evening to the event itself—namely, the coming of the Lord.

I began by reading Acts i. because the promise of the Lord's return is there set forth as the alone hope of the Church, as the first object which would of necessity fix the attention of the disciples, when they were vainly following with their eyes the ascending Saviour, who was going to be hidden in God. In this chapter, just as the Lord was about to leave them, three remarkable features appear. The first is, that the disciples desired to know when and how God would restore the kingdom of Israel. Now Jesus did not say that this was never to happen; He only said, that the time of this restoration is not revealed. It belonged to times and seasons which the Father has put in His own power. The second is, that the Holy Ghost was about to come; and the third, that during the time the disciples were looking towards heaven, two angels said to them, "Why stand ye here gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

They were, then, to expect the return of Christ.

If we study the history of the Church, we shall find it to have declined in spirituality exactly in proportion as this doctrine of the expectation of the Saviour's return had been lost sight of. In forgetting this truth it has become weak and worldly. Not, however, wishing to quit the sphere of the word, let us see therein how the feeling of the return of Christ ruled the intelligence, sustained the hope, inspired the conduct, of the apostles. We have only to this end to look through a few passages of the New Testament.

Acts iii. 19-21. "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come [or "so that the times of refreshing may come"] from the presence of the Lord. . . ." The Holy Spirit is come; He has remained with the Church; but the times of refreshing will come "from the presence of the Lord when he shall send Jesus." It is impossible to apply this passage to the Holy Ghost, because He was already, at that time, come down, and had said by the mouth of the apostle, "Whom the heaven must receive till the times of restitution of all things." And, in truth, the Holy Spirit has not restored all things. He who is to come, according to this passage, is not to come to judge the dead, nor that the world may be burnt up and destroyed; but it is specially for "the restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets."

I cite these passages to make you comprehend what I understand by the coming of the Saviour. It is not the judgment of the dead; it is not the great white throne; but it is the return of Jesus Christ in person, when He shall be sent from heaven. If you compare these verses with what is written in Revelation xx. you will see that the coming of Jesus Christ, and the judgment of the dead, are two distinct events; that when the judgment of the dead takes place, there is not a word about Christ returning from heaven upon the earth; for it is said, "From whose face the earth and the heavens fled away." (Ver. 11.)

The Lord will return to the earth.

Let us now see how Himself first, then the Holy Ghost

by the apostles, have constantly directed our attention to His personal return.

Matthew xxiv. 27-33. "Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." Certainly the expedition of Titus against Jerusalem was not the coming of the Saviour in the clouds of heaven. Neither is this a description of the judgment of the dead before the tribunal of the great white throne. At that time the earth is no more, whilst in the passage just cited the nations of the earth are brought before us, and it is a question of an event in which the earth is concerned. "Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn." It is not a millennium brought about by the exercise of the power of the Holy Ghost. The world has never seen the Holy Ghost. We are told that the tribes of the earth shall lament when they see the Lord Jesus. (Ver. 33.) "So likewise ye, when ye see all these things, know that it [He] is near, even at the doors."

Verses 42-51. The faithfulness of the Church is made to hinge on its watchfulness as regards this truth of the return of Christ. From the moment that it was said, "My Lord delayeth his coming," "then the servant began to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken." "Therefore be ye also ready," said Jesus, "for the Son of man [not death] cometh."

Matthew xxv. 1-13. The expectation of the return of Christ is the exact measure (the thermometer, so to speak) of the life of the Church. As the servant became unfaithful the moment he had said, "My lord delayeth his coming," so it was with the ten virgins, for

it is said, they all slept. It was not death, nor the Holy Spirit, that the ten virgins were told to expect; for neither death nor the Holy Spirit is the Bridegroom. All the virgins were found in the same state; the wise ones (the true saints) as well as the foolish ones, who wanted the oil of the Holy Spirit, slept and forgot the immediate return of Christ, as, on the other hand what wakes them up is the midnight cry that He is coming.

In Mark xiii. we get nearly the same thing. Verse 26 forbids us to apply the passage to the invasion of the Romans;* and when it is said (ver. 22), "It is nigh, even at the doors," there is no thought about the judgment of the dead, nor of the great white throne. At that day, the day of the judgment before the great white throne, there will be no question either of house or household.

* There may have been, at the time of the taking of Jerusalem by Titus, circumstances in some respects resembling those which will yet take place when the prophecies of Mark xiii. and Matthew xxiv. shall be accomplished, so that the disciples might have been able to use the warnings which they contain (although there is no certainty of the fact). But there are insurmountable obstacles in applying "the abomination of desolation" to the army of Titus, or to the Roman ensigns. For there is a period which dates from this event, of which we see no fulfilment, in counting from the taking of Jerusalem. So that it has been found necessary to transport this part of prophecy to Popery, which we know has nothing to do with the invasion of Titus. The passage in Luke would seem to have more to do with the events which took place at the taking of Jerusalem by Titus; but again I say, to attempt to apply the passages which have been occupying us to this event is to lose our time.

Four passages only are to be found in the New Testament which speak of the joy of the departed soul. The first occasion is when the thief said to the Lord (Luke xxiii. 42, 43), "Remember me when thou comest into [in] thy kingdom." It was about the coming of Jesus in glory that his thoughts were occupied—a truth which was familiar to the Jews. The Lord replied to him, "*To-day* shalt thou be with me in paradise." The second case is that of Stephen, who said (Acts vii. 59), "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;" the third, when St. Paul said, "To be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8): the fourth, "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." (Phil. i. 22, 23.) In truth, it is far better to expect the glory, present with Christ, than to remain here below: not that we go to glory when we depart, but we are quit of sin, out of the reach of it, and we enjoy the Lord apart from it. Yes, it is a state far better, but it is also one of expectation, like that in which Christ is Himself placed, sitting at the right hand of the Father, expecting that which is to come.

Luke xii. 32. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning."

Here we find again (circumstantially different) the parable of the unfaithful servant; only the Lord adds, "That servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, [what a picture of Christendom!] shall be beaten with many stripes; but he who knew not [the pagans] shall be beaten with few stripes."

All shall be judged ; but Christendom is in a state worse than that of the Jews or pagans, inasmuch as it has had more advantages.

Luke xvii. 30. " Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."

Luke xxi. 27. " Then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." The fig-tree of which the Saviour speaks on this occasion, is especially the symbol of the Jewish nation. " Watch therefore," He adds, " that ye may stand before the Son of man."

These two chapters, namely, Luke xvii. and xxi., as well as Matthew xxiv. and Mark xiii., relate to the coming of the Lord connected with the Jews — its earthly bearing. To these may be added Luke xix. where the servants who are called, and the enemies who rejected the nobleman, clearly mark the servants of Christ, and the Jewish nation. See particularly verses 12, 13, 27.

John xiv. 2. " In my Father's house are many mansions. . . . And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself." The Lord Himself will come for His Church, in order that the Church may be there, where He is.

Acts i. 11. " This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner."

Acts iii. This is the preaching of the apostle to the Jews : Repent, and Jesus will return. You have killed the Prince of life : you have denied the Holy One and the Just ; God has raised Him from the dead. Repent, be converted, and He will return. But they would not

repent. During three years He had vainly sought fruit from His fig-tree. The husbandmen, on the contrary, killed the Son of Him who had placed them in His vineyard. The Son of God, Jesus, asked pardon for them on the cross, whence His voice is all-powerful, in saying, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do." The Holy Ghost, by the mouth of the apostle, answers to the intercession of Jesus, "I wot that through ignorance ye did it. . . . Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord." But we know they continued to resist the Holy Ghost. (Acts vii. 51.)

Acts iii. 30, 21. "And he shall send Jesus Christ whom the heavens must receive until the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

This is the great end of all the counsels of God. As we have before seen the secret of His will, that God would gather together all things in Christ, we find here what He has spoken of by the mouth of all His holy prophets: that is, the earthly part. How are all these things to be accomplished? Is it by the operation of the Holy Spirit? No, for it is said that "he shall send Jesus." It is, doubtless, true that the Holy Ghost will be shed abroad, and He will be so specially upon the Jews; but in the passage quoted the event is to take place by the presence of Jesus. There cannot be a revelation more explicit, than that it is by the sending of Jesus, that the things spoken of by the prophets will receive their

accomplishment. How can the force and simplicity of this declaration be evaded?

We see the fall, the ruin, of man; we see even all creation subjected to corruption. The bride desires that the Bridegroom may appear. It is not the Holy Spirit who will re-establish the creation, and who is the inheritor of all things; it is Jesus. When Jesus appears in His glory, the world will behold Him, whilst it cannot see the Holy Ghost.

“At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow.” The work of the Holy Spirit is not to re-establish all things here below, but to announce Jesus who will return. Again, it is the Holy Spirit who was in St. Peter, when he said, “Whom the heavens must receive till the time of the restitution.” Receive whom? Not the Holy Ghost (He was descended from heaven already), but Jesus; and all we have to do is to believe.

Let us now turn to the Epistles, in order to be shewn that the coming of the Lord is the constant and living expectation of the church. We see, on referring to Romans viii. 19–22, all creation in suspense until the moment of His appearing. (Compare John xiv. 1, 3; Col. iii. 1–4.) Again (1 Cor. i. 7), “Ye come behind in no gift, waiting for the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ;” and Ephesians i. 10, on which we have already spoken. Since at the last judgment the earth and the heavens will have passed away, it is before this time that God will gather together in one all things in Christ.

Philippians iii. 20, 21. “For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the

Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body."

Colossians iii. 4. "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

The two Epistles to the Thessalonians turn entirely on this subject.

1 Thessalonians. Everything in this epistle has reference to the coming of Christ; all that Paul says of his work, or of his joy, belongs to it.

First of all, conversion itself is made to bear upon it. (Chap. i. 10.) The faithful of Thessalonica, who had served as models to those of Macedonia and Achaia, and whose faith was so spread abroad that the apostle had no need to say anything, "had turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." It is remarkable that this church, one of the most flourishing of those to which the apostles have written, should be precisely that one to which the Lord has chosen to reveal, with most detail, the circumstances of His coming. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him."

Such was the faith of the Thessalonians, that it was spoken of in all the world. What was it? That they expected the Lord from heaven. And it is for us to have this same faith which the Thessalonians had. We ought, like them, to be expecting the Lord before the thousand years. They were certainly not saying there must be a period of a thousand years ere the Saviour comes. (Chap. ii. 19.) "For what is our hope? Are not even

ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ *at his coming?*”

Chapter iii. 13. “To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.” It is evidently the ruling idea influencing the mind of the apostle.

Chapter iv. 13–18. It is remarkable that the consolation which he gives to those who surrounded the deathbed of a Christian, is their friend’s return with Jesus, and their mutual meeting. It is customary to say, “Be content: he is gone to glory.” This was not the way with the apostle. The comfort which he proposes to those who are mourning the death of a believer is, “Be content: *God will bring them back.*” What a change must not the habitual feelings of Christians have undergone, since the consolation given by an apostle is counted in this day as foolishness! The believers in Thessalonica were penetrated to such a degree with the hope of the return of Christ, that they did not think of dying before that event; and when one of them departed his friends were afflicted with the fear that he would not be present at that happy moment. Paul reassures them by asserting that “those who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.” We can understand by this example to what a degree the Church has put away the hope which occupied the souls of the first converts; how far distant we are from the apostolic views, which we have replaced by the idea of an intermediate state of happiness (the soul separated from the body),—a condition true, indeed, and by much superior to ours on the earth,

but vague, and which at best is a state of waiting. Jesus Himself waits, and the dead saints wait.

I by no means desire to weaken the truth of this intermediate state of happiness. Thus the apostle speaks of it in 2 Corinthians v., "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. . . ." After declaring that his hope was in the power of the life of Christ, and that mortality should be swallowed up by it, he adds, "Therefore we are always confident; knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord," &c. That is, if this mortal body is not absorbed in life (is not changed without seeing death), the confidence which I have is not interrupted at death; I have already received the life of Christ in my soul—that cannot fail. It may be that I shall depart, but the life in my soul will not be affected. I have already the life of Christ: if I depart, I shall be with Him.

One more remark on 1 Thessalonians iv. 15, 17: "We which are alive [those which shall be alive on the earth at the coming of the Lord] shall not prevent them which are asleep." "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive [those who remain] shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

If the apostle had expected a millennium of the Holy

Spirit before the coming of Jesus, how could he ever have said, "We who remain until the coming of Christ?" There was, then, in his soul a continual expectation of the coming of Christ, of which he knew not the moment, but which he had a right to expect. Was he deceived in that? No, not at all: he was always expecting; his business was to do so; and waiting had this of good in it, that it kept him completely detached from the world. If we were expecting from day to day the coming of the Lord, where would all those plans be as to family, house, &c., to flatter the pride of life and to get rich? It is the nature of the hope which we have that forms our character; and when the Lord comes, St. Paul will enjoy the fruits of his waiting. The hope which animated him produced its good fruits; it was in the spirit of this hope that he exclaimed, "And I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thess. v. 23.)

1 Thessalonians v. 2-4. Mark well that this day ought not to overtake the followers of Christ as a thief.

2 Thessalonians i. 9, 10; ii. 3-12. Instead of a world blessed with a millennium without the presence of Jesus, behold the man of sin growing worse, until he is destroyed by the glorious appearing of Christ—evidence to us that a mere spiritual millennium alone is untrue. For the mystery of iniquity, which was already working in the time of Paul, was to go on until the man of sin was manifested, who will be destroyed by the glorious appearing of Christ Himself, with the spirit of His

mouth. Now, in such a state of things where is the place for such a millennium?*

1 Timothy vi. 14-16. "Keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, *until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ*, which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen."

2 Timothy iv. 1.† "I charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, *at his appearing* and his kingdom."

Titus ii. 11-13. The grace of God has appeared, teaching us first how to live, and, secondly, the expectation of glory. The appearing of grace is already come, it teaches us to expect the appearing of glory.

Hebrews ix. 28. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." As the great High Priest, when He shall have finished His work of intercession, He will go out of the sanctuary. (Lev. ix. 22-24.)

* For the meaning of the expression, "spirit of his mouth," see Isaiah xi. 4; xxx. 33.

† This passage, compared with 1 Corinthians xv. shews that the appearing of Christ is not at the end; for at the end He has delivered up the kingdom, whereas here, the kingdom takes place at His appearing. Note—the whole period is spoken of, and therefore the judgment of the dead as well as of the quick.

James v. 9. "Behold the judge standeth before the door."

2 Peter i. 16-21. "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty; for he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came to him such a voice from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; and this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation; for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

The transfiguration was, then, a specimen—a kind of pattern—of the coming of the Lord in glory.

1 John iii. 2, 3. "But we know that when he [the Son of God] shall appear, we shall be like him; for *we shall see him* as he is." We shall only be like Him when He appears, not before. "And every man that hath *this* hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." He whose heart is full of this hope conducts himself accordingly—he purifies himself. Knowing that when Jesus shall appear, I shall be like Him, I ought to be as much as possible, even now, such as Jesus. How powerful and efficacious is this truth of the return of Christ, and what practical effect flows out

of its expectation ! This hope is the measure of holiness to us, as it is the motive.*

Those also who are in heaven (Rev. v. 10) say in their songs, "We shall reign on the earth." This is the language of the saints who are already on high, surrounding the throne. Their language is, "*We shall reign*," and not "*we reign*." They are themselves in a state of expectation, like the Lord Jesus Himself, awaiting that which is to happen ; namely, that His enemies be made the footstool for His feet.†

Study also (Matt. xiii. 24-43) the parable of the tares and the wheat. The tares—namely, the evil which Satan has done where the good grain has been sown—are to increase until the harvest, which is the end of this dispensation or age. The evil which he has caused by heresies, false doctrines, false religions, all this evil will continue, increase, and ripen ; these tares, we say, will increase in the Lord's field, until the harvest. Here, then, is a positive revelation, which gives a formal contradiction to the idea of the millennium by the Holy Spirit, apart from the return of the Lord.

We have now seen that the coming of Christ allies itself to all the thoughts, to all the motives of consolation and joy, and to the holiness of the Church, yea even to the dying bed ; and that Christ will bring back with Him those who have previously quitted the body.

* This passage explains Matthew xvi. 23 ; also Matthew xvi. 1 ; Mark ix. 1, 2 ; and Luke ix. 27, 28.

† Critical editions read "they" instead of "we," but this only strengthens the doctrine we are occupied with, as pointing to a remnant on the earth when the Church is gone.

We have also seen, on the one hand, that it is the coming of the Saviour which will be the means of the restitution of all things; and on the other, that evil is to increase in the Lord's field until the harvest.

May the Lord apply these truths to our hearts, dear friends, on one side, to detach us from the things of the world; and, on the other, to attach us to His coming—to Himself in person; and we shall purify ourselves even as He is pure. There is nothing more practical, nothing more powerful to disentangle us from a world which is to be judged, and at the same time to knit us to Him who will come to judge it. Certainly, here is nothing that can better serve to shew us wherein ought to be our purification; nothing which can so console us, invigorate us, and identify us with Him who has suffered for us, in order that we who suffer might reign with Him, co-heirs in glory. Assuredly, if we were expecting the Lord from day to day, there would be seen in us a self-renunciation which is rarely seen among the Christians of the present age. May none of us be found saying, "My Lord delayeth his coming!"

LECTURE IV.

READ LUKE XX. 17.

FIRST RESURRECTION; OR, RESURRECTION OF THE JUST.

THE subject which I propose for this evening's lecture, is the resurrection, and particularly the resurrection of the Church apart; that is, the resurrection of the just as altogether distinct from that of the unjust.

We have already spoken of Christ, the Heir of all things ; of the Church as co-heir with Him ; and of the coming of Christ to reign before the thousand years—an event which we must not confound with the day of the resurrection of the unjust, and of the judgment before the great white throne, which will not take place until after the millennium. We have now to see that the Church will participate in this coming of Christ ; it does so as the subject of the first resurrection.

There is no need to speak to you of the resurrection of Jesus as being the seal of His mission ; it is an admitted truth ; it is enough to quote Romans i. 4, where the apostle tells us that “Jesus Christ was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection of the dead.”* This resurrection was the great fact which demonstrated that Jesus is the Son of God ; but it was likewise, for other reasons, the great theme of the preaching of the apostles, the basis of their epistles, and of all the New Testament.

Let us commence by saying, that the difficulty people

* It is not exclusively by His own resurrection, though there was the first and most important proof. The reader will do well to pay attention to the expression, “from among the dead,” employed elsewhere. It is an expression distinct from the present, and indicates the introduction of a divine power into the realm of death,—a power which withdraws some from it in such a sort as to distinguish them completely from others. This it was that astonished the disciples. (Mark ix. 10.) Resurrection was the faith of every orthodox Jew ; but what they did not understand was a resurrection *from among* the dead

find in the subjects of which we are treating do not arise from the word of God not being simple, clear, and convincing; but from this—that preconceived ideas often rob us of its natural sense. We have habits of thinking apart from the scripture, before we know it; then it is we find inconsistencies—incompatibility—in that which presents itself to us, not suspecting that this incompatibility belongs alone to human preconceived opinions.

The doctrine of the resurrection is important under more views than one. It links our hopes to Christ and to the whole Church, in one word, to the counsels of God in Christ; it makes us understand that we are entirely set free in Him, by our participation in a life in which, united by the Holy Ghost to Him, He is also the source of all strength for glorifying Him, even from the present time; it sustains our hopes in the most solid manner; finally, it expresses all our salvation, inasmuch as it introduces us into a new creation, by which the power of God places us, in the second Adam, beyond the sphere of sin, of Satan, and of death. The soul in departing goes to Jesus, but is not glorified. The word of God speaks of men glorified, of glorified bodies; but never of glorified souls. But, as before observed, prejudices and human teachings have taken the place of the word of God, and the power and expectation of the resurrection has ceased to be the habitual state of the Church.

The resurrection was the foundation of the preaching of the apostles. (Acts i. 22.) “One must be with us a witness of his resurrection.” This was the constant

subject of their testimony. Let us now see in what terms they testified.

Acts ii. 24. "Whom God hath raised up." So verse 32: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses."

Chapter iii. 15. "And killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses."

Chapter iv. 2. This doctrine of the resurrection was acknowledged as the doctrine publicly preached by the apostles; it was not that the soul in dying went to heaven, but that the dead shall live again. As the Pharisees were the greatest enemies of the Lord whilst He was upon earth—that is to say, the falsely righteous ones, as opposed to the truly Righteous One—so in like manner, Satan, after His death, raised up the Sadducees, who were enemies to the doctrine of the resurrection. (Acts iv. 1; v. 17.)

Acts x. 38, 40, 41. St. Peter testifies to this same fundamental truth before Cornelius the centurion and his friends. St. Paul preached it to the Jews of Antioch in Pisidia, saying (Acts xiii. 34), "And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead . . . he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David."

Acts xvii. 18–30. He announces, in the midst of the learned Gentiles, this doctrine, which was the stumbling-stone of their carnal wisdom. Socrates and other philosophers believed, after a fashion,* in the

* It was in metempsychosis, or transmigration to other bodies after all.

immortality of the soul ; but when these men, curious in science, heard of the resurrection of the dead, they mocked. An unbeliever is able to discourse about immortality ; but if he hears about the resurrection of the dead, he turns the subject into derision. And why ? Because in virtue of the immortality of the soul he may exalt himself, he can elevate his own importance. There is something in the idea which can ally itself to man such as he is ; but to think of dust raised again—of a living and glorious being made out of it—this is a glory which belongs only to God, a work of which God alone is capable. For if a body reduced to dust can be reconstituted by God into a living and glorified man, nothing is hid from His power. With the immortality of the soul man can still connect the idea of self—of power in the body ; but when the leading truth is the resurrection of the body, and not the immortality of the soul, man's impotency becomes glaring.

See again (whether the apostle was right or not in appealing to the prejudices of the Pharisees), Acts xxiii. 6 : where St. Paul directly affirms, that it was for the preaching of this doctrine he was called in question. In chapter xxiv. 15, he tells the same truth. In chapter xxvi. he gives it to king Agrippa as the reason of his detention ; so also verse 23.

From these passages it is easily seen, that the resurrection was the basis of the preaching of the apostle and of the hope of the faithful.

We now come to the second part of our subject, the resurrection of the Church apart, or the special resurrection of the just.

“There will be,” says the apostle, “a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust;” but the resurrection of the just, or of the Church, is a thing altogether apart—which has no relation with that of the wicked, which does not take place at the same time with this last, nor after the same principle. For, although both the one and the other are to be accomplished by the same power, there is in the resurrection of the just, a particular principle, namely the habitation of the Holy Ghost in them, which is foreign to the resurrection of the wicked. (Rom. viii. 11.)

The virtue of the resurrection embraces the life, the justification, the confidence, the glory, of the Church. God Himself is made known unto us by the name of “God who raiseth the dead” (2 Cor. i. 9), who introduces His power into the last depths of the effects of our sin—into the domain of death—to bring men out of it by a life which from that moment puts them outside the reach of all the dreadful consequences of sin—a life close to God.

Romans iv. 23–25. It is in “God who quickeneth the dead” that we are called upon to believe; it is the resurrection of Jesus which is the power—the efficacy—of our justification. This is the truth presented in the passage before us. Our union with Jesus raised gives us acceptance with God. We ought to see ourselves already as beyond the tomb.

On this account the faith of Abraham was a justifying faith. “He considered not his own body now (already) dead;” but he believed in a God “who quickeneth the dead;” for this reason his faith “was counted to him for

righteousness.”* The resurrection of Jesus was the great proof, and as to all its moral effects, the establishment of this truth, that the object of our faith is that God raises the dead. This truth is pointedly expressed in the first Epistle of Peter. (Chap. i. 21.) The application is made to us by our union with the Lord.

Colossians ii. 12. “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” The Church is raised now, because Christ is raised as its Head. The resurrection of the Church is not a resurrection whose object is judgment, but simply the consequence of its union with Christ, who has been judged in its stead.

We may observe in this passage how these truths hang together. The resurrection of the Church is a thing of itself, because the Church participates in the resurrection of Christ; we are raised, not only because Jesus Christ will call us from the grave, but because we are one with Him. It is by reason of this unity, that, in partaking of faith, we are already raised with Christ, raised as to the soul, but not as to the body. The justification of the Church is, that it is risen with Christ.

The same fact is expressed in Ephesians i. 18, &c., and ii. 4-6. Paul never said, “If I am saved, I am content.” He knew that it is hope that makes the

* Remark the difference: he believed God was able to perform it, we, that He has done so. Through it we believe on Him.

soul active, which excites the affections, which animates and directs the whole man; and he desired that the Church should have the heart full of this hope. Nor is it enough for one of us to say, "I am saved;" it is not enough for the love of God, which is not satisfied unless we are participators of all the glory of His Son; and we ought not to be indifferent to His will.

Ephesians ii. 6 shews forth the same truth. The presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church is that which characterizes our position before God. As the Spirit of Christ is our consoler, and helps us in our infirmities, testifying withal that we are children of God, and making us able to serve God, so it is on account of the Holy Spirit who is in us that we shall be raised; and it is on account of the Holy Spirit also that the principle of the resurrection of the Church is quite other than that of the resurrection of the wicked. Our resurrection, we say, is the consequence of the abiding of the Holy Ghost in us (Rom. viii. 11)—a very essential difference. The world does not receive the Holy Ghost, "because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him." (John xiv. 27.) Now, "our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. vi. 19); our soul in consequence is filled, or at least it ought to be, with the glory of Christ. Our body, also, which is the temple of the Holy Ghost, will be raised according to the power of the Holy Ghost who dwells in us; a thing which can never be said of the wicked.

It is the resurrection which, having introduced us into the world of the last Adam (even now as partaking of this spiritual life), will introduce us in fact into a

new world, of which He will be the head and the glory, since He has acquired it and will reign there as the risen man.

Observe, in the passages concerning the resurrection, not one speaks of a simultaneous rising of just and unjust; and those which refer to the resurrection of the just speak of it always as of a thing distinct. All will rise. There will be a resurrection of the just and a resurrection of the unjust, but they will not take place together.

I will cite the passages successively, which refer to it.

It is at the coming of Christ that the Church will rise. (Phil. iii. 20, 21; 1 Cor. xv. 23.)

The idea of a resurrection of the just was familiar to the disciples of Christ; and such is represented as to happen in Luke xiv. 14, "Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

But before coming to direct proofs, I would express the conviction that the idea of *the immortality of the soul*,* although recognized in Luke xii. 5 and xx. 38, is not in general a gospel topic; that it comes, on the contrary, from the Platonists; and that it was just when the coming of Christ was denied in the Church, or at least began to be lost sight of, that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul came in to replace that of the *resurrection*. This was about the time of Origen. It is hardly needful to say that I do not doubt the immortality of the soul; I only assert that this view has taken

* In the expression (2 Tim. i. 10),—"Brought life and immortality to light,"—"immortality" signifies the incorruptibility of the body, and not the immortality of the soul.

the place of the doctrine of the resurrection of the Church, as the epoch of its joy and glory.

Luke xx. 35, 36. "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead." The resurrection, then, mentioned here, belongs only to those who shall be made worthy of it. "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that age," that is to say, this world of joy, of the reign with Christ. That resurrection of the dead, then, belongs to the period spoken of, and not only to eternity. "Neither," adds the Saviour, "can they die any more for they are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." The wicked shall be raised to be judged, but those others shall be raised because they have been accounted worthy to obtain the resurrection which Jesus has obtained. We see, in the passage quoted, the proof of a resurrection which concerns the children of God alone; they are the sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. To be a son of God, and to have part in this resurrection, is the title and inheritance of the same persons.

John v. 25-29. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they

that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

It is customary to oppose the latter part of this passage to a view of the resurrection of the just apart; but we shall see that the whole passage enunciates, and even explains and strengthens, the truth which is occupying us.

Two acts of Christ are presented as the attributes of His glory; one, to make alive; the other, to judge. He gives life to those whom He will, and all judgment is entrusted to Him, in order that all, even the wicked, should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. Jesus has been shamefully entreated here below; God the Father takes care that His claim of glory shall be recognized: He (Christ) gives life to whom He will—to their souls first, and then to their bodies. These glorify Him of good will. As to the wicked, the way of obliging them to recognize the rights of Jesus, is to judge them; and this judgment is in the hands of Jesus. In the work of vivification, the Father and Son act together, because those to whom life is given are put into communion with the Father and Son. But as to judgment, the Father judgeth no man, because it is not the Father that has been wronged, but the Son. The wicked will own Jesus Christ in spite of themselves when they are judged. At what epoch will these things be accomplished? For the wicked, at the time of the judgment—the judgment both of the living and of the dead, before the great white throne; for the just, the children of God, when their bodies shall participate in the life already communicated to their souls (the life of Christ Himself) at the resurrection of the just. The

resurrection for these is not a resurrection of judgment, but simply, to repeat it again, the exercise, towards the bodies of God's children, of that quickening power of Jesus, in which He has already worked upon their souls, and which, in God's good time, shall work upon their bodies. "They that have done good," says our text, "unto the resurrection of *life*; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of *judgment*."*

But the objection is made, Jesus has said (ver. 28), "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice." The wicked and the just will then evidently rise together. But three verses before (ver. 25), it is said, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." *Hour* comprehends here all the space of time which has elapsed since the coming of the Saviour; and under this word are contained two states of things quite different, seeing that the dead heard the voice of the Son of God during the time He was living on earth, and that they have been hearing it for eighteen centuries since. This, then, is the interpretation. The hour† for giving life to the soul is an hour which has lasted eighteen centuries already. And the hour is also coming for the judgment. The word hour has the same sense in the two passages. That is to say, there is a time of quickening and a time of judg-

* Really judgment (see Greek); which is said before to be committed to Christ.

† For the use of this word, see (in the Greek) John v. 35; xvi. 4, 25, 26; Luke xxii. 53; 1 John ii. 18; 2 Corinthians vii. 8; Philemon 15.

ment; there is a period during which souls are quickened, and a period when bodies shall be raised. For us, the resurrection is only the application of the quickening power of Jesus Christ to our bodies. We shall be raised, because we are already quickened in our souls. The resurrection is the crowning of the whole work, because we are children of God, because the Spirit dwells in us, because (as far as our souls are concerned) we are already risen with Christ.

There will be a resurrection of life for those who have been already quickened in their souls; and a resurrection of judgment for those who have rejected Jesus.

1 Corinthians xv. 20, 23, sets forth very clearly the connection which exists between the coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead. The order of the resurrection is explicitly shewn. "Christ is become the firstfruits of them that slept" (ver. 20); "of those which slept," and not of the wicked. They that are Christ's shall rise at His coming; then cometh the end, the time when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God the Father. When He comes, He will take the kingdom, but at the end He will deliver it up. The appearing of Christ will therefore take place before the end; it will be for the destruction of the wicked. He will come to purify His kingdom. "Christ the firstfruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end."

1 Thessalonians iv. 14-16: "Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him;" "and the dead in Christ shall rise first." It is the complement—the filling up—of our hopes; it is the fruit of our justi-

fication, the consequence of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us.

The righteous dead shall rise first; then the living righteous shall be changed, and "shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord." All this is a matter which belongs exclusively to the saints—to those who, sleeping or living, are Christ's, and who will be, from that moment, for ever with the Lord.

Philippians iii. 10, 11: "To know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead."

Why speak thus, if it be true that good and bad must rise together, and in the same manner? This resurrection *from among the dead* is just this first resurrection which Paul had before his eyes. I am willing, he says, as it were, to lose all, to suffer all, if, cost what it may, I arrive at the resurrection of the just: such is my desire. Evidently the resurrection from among the dead was a thing that concerned the Church exclusively. I might say, like the apostle, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

As to the period or interval which elapses between the resurrection of the faithful and the wicked, it is a circumstance altogether independent of the principle itself, that is, of the distinction of the two resurrections. Our faith on this point depends upon a revelation, which has only importance because God has so chosen to order

it for His own glory. The period is only mentioned in the Book of Revelation under the expression, “a thousand years.” Between the two resurrections a thousand years elapse. The only point, then, on which I cite the book is upon the length comprised in the reign of the Son of man on the earth. The passage is found in Revelation xx. 4, “And I saw thrones. . . .”

The world will then know that we are the objects of grace, that we have been loved as Jesus Himself has been loved by the Father.

If the first resurrection—that of the just—is not to be taken literally, why should the second—that of the unjust—be so taken? As the object of our hope, and source of our consolation and of our joy, it is but a small thing to know that the unjust shall be raised; but the precious thing—the essential—is to know that the resurrection of the just will be the consummation of their happiness; that in it God will accomplish His love towards us; that, after having given life to our souls, He will give life to our bodies, and will make of the dust of the earth a form suitable to the life which has been given to us on the part of God. We never read in the word of God of glorified spirits, but always of glorified bodies. There is the glory of God, and the glory of those who will be raised.

I desire, dear friends, that the knowledge of this truth, by the power of Christ, on which depends its entire accomplishment, may strengthen us in our hearts unto all perfection. For this knowledge in all its extent is that to which the scripture applies the word “perfection.” Christ was thus made perfect as to His state and

position before God ; we also ourselves are now perfect by faith, in acknowledging that we are raised with Him, as we shall be later as to our bodies. May your bodies, souls, and spirits be preserved blameless until the coming of our Well-beloved ! May this truth of the resurrection of the Church become bound up in our minds, with all the precious truths of our salvation consummated in Christ, and may it be accomplished in the plenitude of our salvation in our bodies also !

LECTURE V.

READ DANIEL II.

PROGRESS OF EVIL ON THE EARTH.

WE have been occupied as yet with the union of Christ, and the Church conformed to His image ; of the coming of Christ Himself, and of the resurrection of the Church, by which it gets a share of this glory of Christ as co-heir.

The subject for to-night is not so full of joy and happiness, but it is right that we should know the testimony which God gives of human wickedness. Let me hope, dear friends, that the consequence of knowing it will be to produce unfeigned seriousness of spirit. The sight of the progress of evil, and of the judgment which it draws down, ought, first of all, to have the effect of making us avoid it ; and, secondly, of impressing us with the power of God, who alone can remove it. " See that ye refuse not him that speaketh." (Heb. xii. 25-29.)

This passage gives the apostle's view of the great change that will take place when the power of evil will be overthrown.

What we are about to consider will tend to shew that, instead of permitting ourselves to hope for a continued progress of good, we must expect a progress of evil; and that the hope of the earth being filled with the knowledge of the Lord before the exercise of His judgment, and the consummation of this judgment on the earth, is delusive.

We are to expect evil, until it becomes so flagrant, that it will be necessary for the Lord to judge it.

First, I shall shew that the New Testament constantly presents to us evil as going on increasing until the end, and that Satan will urge it on until the Lord destroys his power; secondly, I shall endeavour to shew the character which this wickedness will take, in its external form, as a secular power. In other words, what I have to say can be reduced under two heads:—

First, the apostasy which takes place in Christendom itself.

Secondly, the formation, the fall, and the ruin of the Antichrist, in the sense of a visible power.

I begin with Matthew xiii. 36, the parable of the tares. It brings out this circumstance, that, whilst men slept, the enemy sowed tares in the field of the householder; and that, upon the demand of the servants whether the tares ought to be plucked out, the answer was, No—that the wheat and the tares were to grow together until the harvest. It is, then, the sentence of the Lord, that the evil which Satan has done in the

field where the good seed of the word has been sown, shall remain and ripen there until the end. It is an express declaration, that the efforts of Christians shall not have the result of taking away the evil, which is to remain until the day of judgment: "Let both grow together until the harvest." The harvest is at the end of the world—the end of this age; that is, of the dispensation closed by the coming of Christ. We must bear in mind that now, in God's dealings with us, and by us, we have to do with grace, and not with judgment. We have not to judge the world. Even could we say with certainty of such an one—he is a child of the devil, he is precisely on that account out of our jurisdiction; it is a tare. We have to do with grace; we cannot lay hand upon the evil which Satan has produced; but we can act as instruments of grace, for God permits us to sow good seed.

The tares are not simply wicked men—pagans; these last have not been sown among the good grain. The tares are some particular evil sown by the enemy after Jesus Christ had sown the good seed. What, then, we may call heresy, corruption of the truth, in whatever way, or to whatever extent, will remain until the harvest. The evil which Satan has produced by a corrupted religion will exist until the end. All our efforts ought to be directed—not to pluck out the tares, but to gather in the children of God—to assemble together the co-heirs of Jesus Christ.*

* We read in 2 Samuel xxiii. a remarkable prophecy of the judgment of the wicked one who "cannot be taken with hands," and of the beauty and blessing of the coming of that One, who

1 Timothy iv. 1: "The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy. . . ."

We have no reason to expect, in the ordinary meaning given to it, the progress of the gospel; there may be, and will be, as much as is necessary for the gathering together of the children of God. But that which we ought to expect is contained in these words—a kind of picture of the last times—"Some shall depart from the faith." (Compare 2 Pet. ii. 1-3.)

2 Timothy iii. 1-5: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. . . ." Are we to heed what men say? No, but what God says. Observe the language which Jeremiah holds to Hananiah. (Jer. xxviii. 6, &c.) And so we must reply when we are told that the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the channels of the sea. We believe, undoubtedly, that the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth; but that is not the question. The question is, *How* will this be accomplished? By the judgment of God. "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." (Isa. xxvi. 9.)

Let us return to the passage in Timothy. "Men shall be lovers of their own selves," &c. These are not pagans; they are Christians, nominal Christians; for it is written, "Having the form of godliness, but will reign in righteousness, and whose blessings will correspond to His faithfulness in keeping the covenant during our state of misery.

denying the power thereof." The characters, indeed, drawn by the apostle, are those of pagans, such as they are painted in the lowest degree of vileness at the beginning of the Epistle to the Romans, and nearly in the same terms. And it is added, concerning these men of the last times, "They shall wax worse and worse."

We see the same expectation of evil in 2 Timothy iv. 1-4: "I charge thee therefore before God," &c.

It is worth remarking, that the tares were already sown in the days of the apostles; and in one sense it is a happy thing for us. If it had happened later, we should not have had the testimony of the word in this matter, in order to warn us and direct us, when these sorrowful events came to pass: as it is, we have the perfect light of God upon this state of things.

1 Peter iv. 17: "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God." Compare these words with Acts xx. 28-31: "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock; also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." This state of things began during the lifetime of the apostles.

1 John ii. 18. This passage declares, that "the last time" does not mean the time of Jesus Christ, but the time of antichrists. These were precursors of the great Antichrist. That which characterizes the last time

is not the spread of the gospel over the whole earth, but the presence of antichrist.

Jude. This Epistle is a treatise in itself upon the apostasy ; and in verse 4 we have a succinct description of its character. The apostle says that he found it needful to exhort the believers to contend for that which they had already received. Some had already crept in amongst them, who were the germ of the apostasy ; and this was to continue until the judgment of Jesus Christ. For, after having described their character more in detail, he adds (ver. 15), that it is this class which would be the object of the judgment of Jesus Christ when He should come. Of course, therefore, the evil, which was manifested in the Church almost from the beginning of its existence, would remain until the coming of Christ. In verse 11 we get three sorts of apostasy brought together in these men : natural apostasy, ecclesiastical apostasy, and open revolt, upon which last the judgment will fall. First, the character of Cain is given us — apostasy of nature — hatred, unrighteousness ; secondly, Balaam — teaching wrong things for a recompense (this is the ecclesiastical apostasy) ; and thirdly, the character of Korah, that is, of him who set himself up against the rights of priesthood and of royalty, the royalty of Christ, in the types of Moses and Aaron.

Alas ! it is evil, and not the gospel, which will gather together the world. “And I saw three unclean spirits, like frogs, come out of the mouth of the false prophet to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.” (Rev. xvi. 13, 14.)

But it is said that the secular power of corrupted Christendom has disappeared by judgment, and that the destruction of its influence will give place to the gospel. But the Spirit says, "The ten horns [kings] which thou sawest upon the beast [the Roman empire], these shall hate the whore [ecclesiastical power], and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled." (Rev. xvii. 16, 17.) Christians are desiring the destruction of the influence of the great whore upon the world ; but even should her external power be destroyed, would the kingdoms become the kingdoms of Christ? On the contrary, the kings will give their power to the beast. The great whore has ruled the beast ; at length her power and her riches shall be taken away from her, but only that the ten horns may give their power to the beast, that all uncertainty may be dissipated, and that his self-will and blaspheming character may be fully manifested in his last apostasy. It is the power of corruption and seduction which will give place to the power of open rebellion against God. Thus we get the transition from corruption to rebellion.

2 Thessalonians ii. 3-12 : "That day shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition ; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God."

All this must happen before the day of the Lord comes. We must take the facts as the word of God reveals them. Christians, having seen the promise in

the scripture that the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, have said, Yes, we will fill it; whilst in the scripture this event is attributed to the glory of Christ. The spirit of His mouth, by which the Lord will destroy the wicked one, is not the gospel, but the force and power of the judgment of Christ. See Isaiah xi. 4: "With the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." Isaiah xxx. 33: "The breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it."

We may observe, that this Antichrist will unite in his person the characters of wickedness which have appeared from the beginning. First, man has always wanted to have his own will; secondly, he has exalted himself against God; thirdly, he has put himself under the guidance of Satan. These are just the three things which will be reproduced in the Antichrist—all the energy of man exalting itself against God, the king doing according to his will, his coming after the power of Satan. It is the ripened fruit of the human heart, which is itself an antichrist.

It is known to all of us that there have been three successive beasts: the empire of Babylon; then the empire of the Persians; then the empire of the Greeks, or of Alexander in particular; and that the fourth is the Roman empire—a beast with marks altogether peculiar to itself.

At the beginning, or rather before the beginning of these four monarchies, the throne of God was on the earth at Jerusalem. In His temple, above the ark where the law was deposited, Jehovah manifested His presence in a sensible manner. But at the commence-

ment of this present period, which is that of the Gentiles, the throne of Jehovah was taken away from Jerusalem (as is detailed in the chapters from i. to xi. of the prophet Ezekiel). The glory of Jehovah, which the prophet had seen in chapter i., near the river Chebar, he sees, in chapter xi., leave Jerusalem ; it departs from the house (chap. x. 18, 19), and from the city (chap. xi. 23). It is a remarkable fact, that the glory of Jehovah has quitted its terrestrial throne. But more ; at the same time this terrestrial power was transferred from Jerusalem to the Gentiles, and government entrusted to men. So we read in Daniel ii. 36-38 : "This is the dream ; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. Thou, O king, art a king of kings : for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory."

You thus see that, by the destruction of the last king of the Jews, earthly dominion passed to the Gentiles in the person of Nebuchadnezzar. He began by establishing a false religion by force. He made a statue that all the world was to worship, and he became lifted up in heart ; hence he was made to become as a beast for seven years. That is, instead of conducting himself humbly as a man before God—as before Him who had given him his power, on the one hand, he exalted himself, and on the other, ravaged the world to satisfy his will.

Omitting the second and third monarchies, which are not at this moment of direct importance to us, and pursuing the character of the fourth, we meet in it certain lineaments worthy of remark. The Jews have

been in a state of captivity from the time of Nebuchadnezzar unto this day. It is true that there was a return of the people from the captivity of Babylon, but without their having ceased to be under the power of the Gentiles. The throne of God has in no sense been re-established; and if God did permit the Jews to return to their country for a short time, it was that His Son might appear at the commencement of the fourth monarchy. And, in fact, it was at the moment when the fourth monarchy, under its imperial form, had become the universal power (Luke ii. 1)—it was just at that time, we say, that the Son of God, by right King of the Jews and of the Gentiles, was presented to them. And what reception did He meet? They crucified Him. The chief priests, who, as viewed by God, were the representatives of religion upon earth, and Pontius Pilate, the representative of earthly power, joined in league together to reject and put to death the Son of God. Thus the fourth monarchy became guilty of rejecting the rights of the Messiah. The Jews, as we shall see presently more in detail, are set aside; and then comes in the calling of the Church for the heavenly places. But as to that which concerns the Church on earth, we have seen it marred by the seed of the wicked one, and the apostasy which resulted from it; we have seen afterwards that this corruption will give place to a more open and daring revolt of the beast itself (that is, of this same fourth monarchy under a new and last form yet to be developed). It is this that will be the occasion of its judgment (Dan. vii. 9–11, 13, 14), “I beheld till the thrones were cast down

[set*], and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him; and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake; I beheld, even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame." Verses 13, 14, "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

This is the kingdom given to the Son of man, when the fourth beast is destroyed. The judgment and destruction of the fourth monarchy has not yet taken place, as we know from Daniel ii. 34, 35: "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-

* The common translation is "cast down," but "set," or "placed," is more exact, after the LXX, and a good number of other authorities.

floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." That is, before the stone cut out without hands spreads out and fills the whole earth, it completely destroys the statue: gold, silver, brass, iron, clay, are carried away as chaff before the wind. None of this is yet accomplished. In the action of the stone, no mention is made of a change of character of the statue; it is a blow—a sudden one—a blow which breaks in pieces, destroys, leaves not a trace of the existence of the statue; as it is said, "No place was found for them." The Roman empire—the feet, and with the feet all the rest—disappears. By this one blow the whole is pulverized, destroyed, annihilated; and *after* this judgment, the stone which fell upon the statue becomes a mountain which fills the whole earth.

Did Christianity break to pieces the fourth monarchy, when it began to be promulgated? In no wise. The Roman empire has continued; it has even become christian; nay, more, the feet of the statue were not then in existence. The act of destruction, which is marked in the fall of the little stone upon them, does not represent the grace of the gospel; nor has it any reference to the work which the gospel accomplishes. Besides, it is *after* the *total* destruction of the statue that the stone *begins* to grow; which signifies that the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah, which is to fill the whole earth, will not begin to spread until after the fourth beast has been judged and destroyed.

There remains a difficulty to be cleared up in the

history of this beast. It may be alleged that the Roman empire does not exist in our days. It is an additional proof in support of what we have been saying. In Revelation xvii. 7, 8, the angel says, "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not:" the Roman empire, as an empire, exists no longer; but what follows? "And shall ascend out of the bottomless pit and go into perdition; and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder." It existed; next, it exists no more; then, it will come out of the pit. It will have a really diabolical character; it will be a full expression of the power of Satan.

That which we learn, then, in general, of this beast, is, first, that from its beginning, the Roman empire has been guilty of the rejection of Jesus as king of the earth here below; secondly, that later in the time of this fourth monarchy, there is a little horn that speaketh great things; and, lastly, that this fourth beast, after having ceased to exist for a season, will re-appear upon the scene out of the bottomless pit, and be destroyed on account of the great words which the little horn spoke. This beast is connected with a power described in 2 Thessalonians ii. 9: "That wicked one whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders," whose destruction is found in verse 8. There is another description of the last head of the beast (see Rev. xvii. 11), which is the beast himself.

Daniel xi. 36, &c.* The agreement between this

* Verse 35, the Jews are passed by. Read verse 36: "The king shall do according to his own will"

passage and 2 Thessalonians ii. 9 is clear. We see in both the same exaltation of himself against God. In the epistle, the power of Satan is added, because the wicked one is presented in his character of apostasy and iniquity; in Daniel xi. in his earthly and royal character. As to the third mark which we have signalized in iniquity—the will of man, it also appears: “the king shall do according to his own will.”

It is observable, also, that this wicked one is alluded to in John v. 43. The Jewish nation will receive him who comes in his own name.

The iniquity, then, of the heart of man arrives at its height in the last head of the fourth monarchy.

Isaiah xiv. 13–15 describes the self-exaltation of the same under the title of the king of Babylon. “Thou hast said in thine heart,” &c.

It is exactly all the privileges, all the rights of Christ, which this king arrogates to himself: “I will ascend into heaven”—what Christ only has done; “I will exalt myself above the stars of God”—the throne of Christ is above principalities and powers; “I will sit, also, upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north.” “It is the palace of the great king,” the king of Israel at Jerusalem. Christ is to come with clouds—“I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,” says this one: his end is, “Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.”

I am afraid that many a cherished feeling, dear to the children of God, has been shocked this evening; I mean, their hope that the gospel will spread itself over the whole earth during the actual dispensation. It was

just the Church's task to proclaim the glory of Christ everywhere; but as for the fact in result, if we express ourselves according to the word of God, as we see it in the later epistles and other scriptures, we shall see all that is powerful in this world in operation, but without regard to God. All the intelligence of man, his faculties, his talents, his knowledge, will be displayed; all that which can seduce the heart, and master the mind, all the resources in the character and nature of man, apart from conscience, will astonish the world, and draw it into following the beast, and place them under the influence of Antichrist; because the glory of man in self-exaltation, and not service to Christ in humiliation, is man's natural bent. "He that exalteth himself shall be abased."

But, you will say, to insist upon such a result is to discourage all our endeavours to propagate the gospel on the earth. We answer, If false hopes are entertained, you are already deceived. It is indeed true, that the view which has been taken of the progress of evil is not very encouraging to the efforts of those whose hopes have been founded on their own ideas. But ask yourselves this question, Did the fact that God told Noah that He was going to destroy the world, and did his full conviction that the judgment of God was about to come, prevent his preaching to his fellow mortals? On the contrary, it was precisely this which animated him, in order that he might gain those who had ears to hear. The conviction that false Christianity will become more and more refined, more corrupt in the world, ought to give but the more energy and activity to the love of

him who believes; and the nearness of the judgment of God, instead of paralysing our efforts, ought to drive us with more power, more energy, more faithfulness, to present the gospel—the only means of causing men to escape the righteous judgments which threaten them.

When I say that the tares, instead of diminishing, will continue to grow, do we thereby hint that the good seed will not increase? By no means. If the evil is to ripen for judgment, God gives, at the same time, power to the testimony that would separate the good from it. This I believe to be God's usual mode of procedure. If we were to see three thousand souls converted in Geneva in a day, it would be said the millennium is come, the gospel is going to spread over the whole world. How is it? There are perhaps not three hundred converted in a year. The conversion of many thousands at Jerusalem, what did it prove? That God was going to judge that city, and that He saved from that perverse generation those who should be saved. Whenever we see evil increasing, and God at the same time acting in drawing away from it those who believe, it may be taken as a sign that the judgment of God is nigh. It cannot be denied, that God is acting powerfully by His Spirit in these days; we ought to thank Him with all our hearts. Let it be a sign to us, that God will remove His own children from a world which will shortly be judged.

There are two signs of the proximity of judgment: the one is, that piety increases, and that all the resources of man develope themselves in a wonderful manner;

the other is, that Christians are withdrawing from this state of things. In either case, there is nothing to hinder us working for our divine Master. On one side is to be seen the work of grace operating, deepening, extending, and God separating His children from the evil around; on the other hand are to be seen all the principles of the wicked one in manifest development. In the word of God I see an express declaration, that the present economy will have an end, and the evil go on to a greater and greater height, until that wicked one is destroyed by the coming of Christ.

Romans xi. 22. Let us conclude with the warning which the Saviour gives us: "Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."

Has the Church kept itself in this goodness of God? Truly Christendom has become completely corrupted; the dispensation of the Gentiles has been found unfaithful: can it be again restored? No: impossible. As the Jewish dispensation was cut off, the christian dispensation will be also. May God give us grace to continue steadfast in our hope, and to rest upon His faithfulness, which will never fail us!

LECTURE VI.

READ DANIEL VII. 16-27.

THE TWO CHARACTERS OF EVIL :— ECCLESIASTICAL
APOSTASY, AND CIVIL APOSTASY.

UP to the present, dear friends, we have only spoken of the happiness that pertains to the Church, save that, at our last meeting, we traced the progress which evil will make on the earth until the very end. This evil has a twofold character, upon which I will speak a few words, seeing that the relations which exist between the power of evil and the judgments which await it, have a special interest for the children of God. When the evil has come to its height, God will destroy it.

The verses which I read are the interpretation which the angel gives to Daniel of the vision of the beasts which the prophet saw ; and, as always occurs in symbolic prophecies, the interpretation contains many new features. In the explanation given to Daniel, all that will happen to the saints is added; but the principal subject of the chapter is the beast who exalts and elevates himself against the most high God.

I say, dear friends, that there are two characters in the evil which manifests itself on the earth : the first is ecclesiastical apostasy ; and the second, apostasy of the civil power itself.

First, apostasy of the Church—viewed in its outward responsibility here below—has in principle taken place. Later on there will be a more open manifestation. As

to the second, the civil power will rise against Him to whom all government belongs—against Christ, whom God will establish king over the earth. It is in the time of the fourth beast (Roman empire) that this revolt will take place.

Before entering directly on our subject of to-day, I desire to make a few remarks on Matthew xxv., to which we shall return when we speak of the nations; for all the peoples of the earth which shall exist at the end of the times shall be either subject to Christ and, consequently, saved, or in rebellion and, consequently, destroyed. But to remove doubts on the subject of this chapter, a few words must be said on it. People believe ordinarily that the judgment of which this chapter treats is the last or general judgment; but they are wrong. It is the judgment of the living nations on this earth, and not of the dead. Accordingly I did not speak of it when we treated of the resurrection of the dead. In this chapter of Matthew, I repeat, there is no question whatever of resurrection. In chapters xxiv. and xxv. are seen the judgment of the Jews, what will happen to that nation; next, what will happen to believers; then, what will happen to the Gentiles. It is the judgment of the quick, and not of the dead. It is this when we read, "Before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." What has given rise to the notion that it is the judgment of the dead is the statement that "these [the wicked] shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life

eternal." But this would only tell us that the judgment of the living would be *final* like that of the dead. Certainly, when God judges the living, His judgment sends some to eternal punishment and others to life eternal. The judgment of the living is as certain as that of the dead. We shall be able to speak of it in its place.

Last time I was speaking mostly upon the tares, that is, the ecclesiastical apostasy—of the progress of evil there,—of that which has happened to the Church as on earth. Now I am going to look into the apostasy of the civil power in its outward form, and the judgment which will come on it from God; for His wrath will fall upon this power. If at the close, ecclesiastical evil in some sort disappears in the character of secular power; and if the civil power has exalted itself, ecclesiastical power is not the less vigorous; only it has not the supremacy, and herein is the difference. In other words, it is not that ecclesiastical power has improved itself, only it is not exercised in the same way; but its influence is not the less pernicious. It is no longer an ecclesiastical power wielding the secular arm, which is seen riding on the beast, and ruling it; but it takes a more mysterious form, and consequently a more dangerous one. Its occult influence continues, though deprived of its outward splendour; for by their pride men now begin to lift themselves up and combine against God, and so prepare the way for the son of perdition.

Although ecclesiastical wickedness is always the worst, nevertheless, as we have been saying, civil apostasy will have its time of manifestation. Scripture tells us

that all civil power is of God. Now, in the same way that the Church loses its proper force and character by its rebellion against God, so the civil government will be found in a state of revolt and apostasy when, instead of confessing fealty to God, it sets itself up against God, who is the source of its authority.

The Spirit of God being the true strength of the Church, the Church's revolt begins when, instead of being subject to Christ, it gives itself over to the will and power of man, leans upon man's aid, and renounces truth to follow error. Christ is the Head: the Holy Spirit is the only strength by whose means the Church can act; and when the Church is not guided by the Spirit, and is not in this sense truly subject to Christ, Christendom is practically apostate. Now, at the end of the present dispensation, the civil power will be found in this same state of revolt; and be it remembered that apostasy in the civil power is a thing much more manifest and prominent than in the Church. This will take place in the bosom of Christendom; and it would seem that ecclesiastical wickedness will be its moving power. We have examples of this in scripture. When Absalom was in revolt against David, Ahithophel was his counsellor. (2 Sam. xv.) The instigator of the rebellion was, without doubt, Satan; but Ahithophel directed the conspiracy against the king. It was Dathan and Abiram, simple Israelites (though men of renown), who rebelled against Moses; but the revolt is called that of Korah, who was a Levite, and seduced the others. In the same way, God accuses the priests and the prophets of Judah of the iniquity of the people, since the civil power had

only followed their evil counsels. The same has been the order of things in Christendom. Those who ought to have instructed the Church, who ought to have represented the wisdom of God, and have recalled governments to a sense of their duty towards God, being themselves in a revolt against Him, have concealed the truth, have taken a form which has seduced the world, and have thus led the civil power into the same departure from God.

There will be a revolt of this latter, but the ecclesiastical power will be the soul of it.

What do we find at Armageddon? A false prophet who falls there along with the beast. From the beginning to the end, there is always a beast, and with the beast a false prophet. It is the one or the other who guides the rebellion. But at the end the beast takes the lead, as being able to act more directly and freely: thus it is the beast which at the last is the direct object of judgment. Such we find to be the case from Daniel vii. But spiritual energy has been ministering to its power.

From the instant that the beast, or the civil power of the fourth monarchy, shall set himself in revolt against God, this monarchy will be found in relation with the Jews; and it is this which introduces us anew into the history of this people. You remember, dear friends, that when the fourth beast appeared on the scene of this earth, there were Jews at Jerusalem; Christ was presented as King of the Jews to the fourth beast, represented by Pontius Pilate, who rejected Him in this character which He is never to lose. At the end of the age the same fact will be reproduced: the Jews returned

to their own land, though without being converted—will find themselves in connection with the fourth beast. There will be saints among them ; and this fourth beast, exalting himself against God, will put himself in direct opposition to Christ, as the King of the Jews. It is true, indeed, that his deadly opposition to Christ will go much farther than at the time when Christ stood before Pontius Pilate ; for he will then arrogate to himself His rights as King of the Jews ; and it is then that Christ, coming down from heaven, will destroy the beast, together with the Antichrist, and will take the remnant of the Jews to be His earthly people, and will put all nations under His feet.

This being the case, you will readily understand that many things in scripture apply to the Jewish saints, that is, to this faithful remnant of the Jews, and not to the Church. We know, for example, that, during the time of the ecclesiastical apostasy, there have been many persecutions against God's faithful children ; in such cases, the saints of all times could draw comfort from the consolations of God found in such passages ; but in these last times, when it is a question of persecution of the saints, the application must be made to the remnant of the Jews, whose "blood will be shed like water." (Ps. lxxix. 3.)

If we consider the history of the beast in a general manner, whether in its pagan form, as under Tiberius Cæsar, and the other emperors ; or under the influence of the corrupted Christianity of the middle ages, we see there have been, at every succeeding epoch, persecutions against the saints ; and we may use as of them the scriptural expressions, "And in her was found the

blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." (Rev. xviii. 24.) But when we come to the time when the civil power will openly raise the standard of revolt—to the moment when these prophetic facts have their full realization, it is upon the Jews that the persecutions will fall; to whom, therefore, these citations have their primary application. From the moment that the rights of Christ, as King of the Jews, are agitated, it is the Jews who will appear on the scene; for the Jews are God's earthly people. But where is the Church then? It will be entirely out of the scene at the time of these last persecutions.

Before we quote the chapters which treat of the apostate civil power substituted for the apostate ecclesiastical power, we would insist again upon this, that the revolt of the ecclesiastical power is not the less dangerous because it has not the supremacy. On the contrary, we repeat, that this power is the secret counsellor of all the evil. The only change that will take place is, that it will cease to have *outwardly* the preponderance; and the not seeing this has led many into error. Because men, in the use of ordinary observation only, have perceived that it could no longer depose kings, they have supposed that the ecclesiastical power had absolutely disappeared. No attention has been paid to that which the children of God might ascertain out of His word, namely, that its moral influence would survive the destruction of its political existence; and that it was precisely this influence which would urge on the power, properly so called political, to revolt against God, and thus to its destruction.

I am not saying that it is not the will of man, which by its own energy guides the beast to its eternal ruin. This is indeed true; but in the meantime, it is the ecclesiastical apostasy which, either arrogating to itself the power, or shutting the door to the manifestation of the will of God, seduces by its machinations the inhabitants of the earth to acknowledge and adore the beast.

I advert to the passages which refer to the observations just made.

First, the end of Daniel vii., where the fourth beast is found; afterwards, Revelation xvi., and especially chapter xvii., where the two are distinguished, namely, the great whore or Babylon, and the beast. In chapter xvii. we get the woman clothed with scarlet, a power whose principal element is ecclesiastical; she is mounted on the beast (civil power). After that, "the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore [ecclesiastical power], and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to . . . give their kingdom to the beast."

Let us now examine the passages which concern the sources of evil, and more particularly the kind of evil which is exhibited in that power which is in rebellion against God, namely, the fourth monarchy. Let us see the form which the rebellion will take.

In Revelation xii. 3 we find the source of the power, "the great red dragon." We are there, as it were, admitted behind the scenes, and see Satan desiring to destroy Him who is to govern all nations with a rod

of iron—Christ; and, in Christ and with Christ, the church. It is properly the power of Satan, and the great combat.

The word of God puts in contrast the Father and the world; flesh and Spirit; Satan and the Son of God. Here we have the great dragon or Satan, who wants to devour Him who is to govern the nations with a rod of iron; but it is in heaven that we see it. Afterwards (ver. 9) he is cast out, an event which has not yet taken place.

Here there is a difficulty to some minds. Because the devil is cast out of the conscience, which is true,* they suppose that he is cast out of heaven. Satan has indeed no power over our conscience if we have understood the value of the blood of Christ; but he is still in heaven, where he accuses the children of God. We see from Ephesians vi. 12 that the wicked spirits (margin) are in the heavenly (margin) places: by reason of this, there will be a battle in heaven—a battle, the effect, not of intercession nor of priesthood, but of power, which will take place, perhaps, with the help of angels; but which will ever be a work of power. At the same time, though Satan shall be cast down from heaven, he will not yet be chained to the bottomless pit; and the fruits of his wickedness will not yet have found their limit; so it is said, “the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.”

* That is, his accusing power is rendered null by virtue of the blood and work of Jesus Christ.

Satan, cast down from heaven to earth, will act there by the agency of the Roman empire. Revelation xiii. describes what will appear on the scene as the providential instruments by which he will seek to make good his power on the earth: "I saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns."* This is the terrestrial agency. This beast will unite all the characters of the three previous beasts.

The authority of the dragon becomes established in the Roman empire—in the beast with seven heads and ten horns. "I saw one of its heads, as it were, wounded, to death;" that is, one of the governing forms of the Roman empire ruined. But afterwards the mortal wound is healed, and the form which was destroyed re-established. Now, if we compare the acts of the little horn of the same beast in Daniel, we shall find that the little horn "whose mouth speaketh great things, before whom three [horns] fell"—that this very one, we say, becomes the beast itself. That is, the beast will find itself under the dominion of this little horn; as we might say, that Napoleon was the French empire, because he wielded all its resources. This beast will be the civil power, the Roman empire, in apostasy, or in open revolt against God.

But there is also another beast (which is not the Roman empire) which exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him (*ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ*).

* It is remarkable that the dragon has his crowns on his heads; the beast of chapter xiii. has them on his horns. There is no question of crowns on the beast in the last form of all that he takes.

Verses 11 to 14. "And I beheld and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth." Here is something which has the semblance of Christ's power, and which later, in the midst of the Jews, will wear the form of Christianity ; but, as understood by the apostle, it is Satan's.

It is, then, the second beast who will seduce the inhabitants of the earth, and who will cause them to follow the first, namely, the civil power of the Roman empire.

"And I saw one of the heads, as it were wounded to death." This has already happened to the imperial form of the Roman empire ; but the wound is to be entirely healed. Thus the beast loses its imperial character for a time, and its wound is afterwards healed. When this takes place in all the astonished earth, men go after it.

The imperial beast will therefore again be seen on the earth, and in all the earth they will wonder after it. But we have also read that the second beast, by the great wonders which he doeth, seduces the inhabitants of the earth. The second beast will appear at the end under the character, not of a beast, but of a false prophet ; all his secular power will be lost. He will no longer be a beast ravishing, devouring ; this feature will be entirely effaced. And he will be seen as the false prophet,* who will be recognized as the second beast already spoken of, by the perfect resemblance of his

* The false prophet is not Mahomet. "He exerciseth the power of the first beast before him (*ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ*)."
Now Mahomet has never done this.

character, as the person, in short, who has done the things which the second beast has done, but who appears at the close under this new form. (Compare Rev. xiii. 14, with xix. 20.)

If we take the moral side of the events already accomplished, we know who has exercised all the power in presence of the civil authority; but there will be one also who will do great wonders and seduce the inhabitants of the earth.

Farther on we shall have to look into the consequences of all this; in the meanwhile, let us gather up what we have been saying. Chapter xii. shews us the dragon in heaven, as the origin, the first cause of all this rebellion. Chapter xiii. gives us the Roman empire under its imperial form, as the providential visible agent. This beast is wounded to death, but his mortal wound is healed. There is also in its presence another power who seduces the inhabitants of the earth; and it is when the mortal wound of the first beast is healed, "that all the world wondered after the beast." Add to this the circumstance of chapter xix., namely, that the second beast ceases to be one, and appears at the end as a false prophet.

In chapter xvii. there is a description of the first beast, which gives us other particulars. Verses 7, 8: "And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from

the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is."

It ascends out of the bottomless pit, that is, becomes positively the power of Satan towards the end ; and this is what will happen when Satan, being cast out of heaven (which event will occur when the church has been caught up into heaven), will come down to the earth in great wrath. Then, under his influence the beast (the Roman empire) "that was, and is not, and yet is," resumes his strength and form ; that is, the civil power, instead of being in submission to God, takes the character of Satan, and signalizes itself, at his instigation, by an open revolt against the power of God.

To find all the marks for recognizing this last form of the beast, we must wait until the imperial head of the Roman empire, the eighth king, shall appear in the world. This must take place before its ruin.

When the Roman empire existed under its pagan form, it had not ten kings ; but when this beast reappears (let us keep in mind that it is the Roman empire), ten kings will give their power to it, instead of ten kings replacing it. More than this, it is after having been destroyed that it will come again into existence. In a word, it is not the pagan beast, nor the history of the middle ages, nor of ten barbarian kings (if indeed ten could be pronounced upon with any certainty), who have taken the place of the empire, but "and yet is ;"* that

* [It is well known and sure that the genuine reading is *καὶ ἄρᾶσται* "and shall be present" (not *καίπερ ἐστίν* "and yet is"). This evidently confirms the case, besides removing a sort of enigma, or paradox, in the vulgar text.—ED.]

is, the mortal wound will be healed, and the imperial beast will re-appear.

The ten kings “shall give their strength and power unto the beast;” there will be an imperial head—an emperor, and ten kings, who will give him their power; the kingdoms will continue in existence, but it will be a confederation of them. As an illustration, we may refer to the kingdoms of Spain, Holland, Westphalia, &c., under Napoleon. There has been the beast; there have been, it may be, ten kings; but *never yet ten kings giving their power to the beast who was not, and who came anew into existence.*

“The seven heads are seven mountains.” (We are still occupied with the Roman empire.) “And there are seven kings; five are fallen, and one is”—namely, the imperial one which existed in the time of John,—“and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth (because the seven have passed), and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.” That is, there will be an eighth head, one of a peculiar character, who will re-unite all the power of the beast, who will be the beast himself, and who, whilst a head apart, is still one of the seven. It is the imperial head under a new form; for there are to be ten kings, who will give their power to this eighth head; and it is in this form that it will go down to destruction. It is exactly here that the coming of Christ, and of the church, connects itself with the subject of which we are treating. (Rev. xix.; 2 Thess. ii.)

We must yet quote from Daniel xi. 36–45: “And

the king shall do according to his will." (Compare this with 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4, and following verses.) We may observe, that in Daniel xi. the question is not one of ecclesiastical supremacy, but rather of wars between civil powers in the East. With verse 36 begins the history of Antichrist, of "the king who shall do according to his own will," just like the little horn in chapter vii., and who at last, after dealing in an idolatrous and apostate way in Jerusalem, finds his end with that first beast. It is a king like any other, a king of the earth, but exercising his power in the holy land at the close. Christianity, as such, is not brought before us, nor the mystery of lawlessness in it: that had preceded the appearance of the lawless one according to 2 Thessalonians. Again, I say, it is no question of ecclesiastical matters, but of a king of this earth, who becomes an object of attack to the kings of the North and of the South.

One remark on 2 Thessalonians ii. for our consolation in the midst of this sad concourse of events. "Now we beseech you, brethren," says the apostle, "by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind," &c. Those who love the truth will entirely escape this deceivableness of unrighteousness, to which, on the contrary, all those who will be delivered by the judgment of God, who have "not received the love of the truth;" but "have pleasure in unrighteousness." This is the evil which is coming, and the world ought to be warned of it; because some may be salutarily frightened at the thought and led to consider the word of God. And why is all this announced to the children of

God? It is in order that they may draw out of it the fullest comfort, and may separate themselves from all that which drags men on to destruction. I say not that we Christians shall be involved in the catastrophe; but that, by being told beforehand of the judgments which will take place at this dreadful crisis, we are led to detach ourselves, even at this present time, from the causes which, by their nature, and by the justice of God, bring it on.

The apostle, it would seem, had spoken a good deal of these things to the church of the Thessalonians, and had taught them to expect the coming of the Lord. Now, what had Satan done? He had tried to terrify them, in telling them that the day of the Lord was there (*ἐνέστηκεν*, 2 Thess. ii. 2). No, says the apostle, I beseech you, by the coming [presence, see Greek] of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to him, [which will precede that day,] that ye be not soon shaken in mind, &c. (as if we were already in it). This day will come upon the lawless one, and not upon you; you will already have been caught up to Him, and you will accompany Him personally in that great day when He will appear.*

The day is present, said the seducers; the day is come! No, says the apostle, the day will not come until you, the

* The idea which usually prevails in the interpretation of this passage is, that *παρουσία* and *ἡμέρα* have the same meaning affixed to them by the apostle, and that he uses the words interchangeably. *Παρουσία* means "presence," not necessarily involving manifestation to the world; *ἡμέρα* "day," on the contrary, always has to do, in the Old Testament, with judgment. Here the

Lord's faithful ones, have been caught up into the air, and until the lawless one shall be revealed.

These consolations are again confirmed (vers. 9, 10): "Even him whose coming . . . is with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth."

It is only needful to add, that in this chapter it is the description of the moral character, and of the unbridled iniquity of the lawless one, and of the power of Satan; whilst in Daniel xi. it is the picture of his outward character.

It is to be feared, dear friends, that the exposition of prophecy this evening has not been the view which you have been hitherto led to take of it. I have been endeavouring to open out the distinction, and at the same time the connection, which there is between the civil and ecclesiastical power; as well as the distinction, and at the same time the connection between the ecclesiastical apostasy and civil apostasy. The two things are closely allied, because we read that the second beast exercises all the power of the first beast before him; and that the false prophet, which is the second beast, is thrown into the lake of fire with the first.

We have also noticed that this fact connects itself with the presence of the Jews at Jerusalem, in whose vicinity the beast will come to his end—an event which will close this present dispensation, in bringing out the power of Christ upon the earth, which will lead to the

apostle uses the presence of the Lord, and our gathering together to Him, in contrast with the day: "I beseech you, by his presence and our gathering to him, not to be distracted about the day, as if it were here."

union of Christ with the remnant of the Jews ; and in consequence of that, to the bringing of all nations under His sceptre. I have only spoken of the fourth beast.

There are two points worthy of remark in connection with the history of Israel : first, as to those nations who were in league against Israel, when this people were owned of God ; and, secondly, as to the nations who carried them into captivity. As yet we have only been discussing the times of the Gentiles, that period during which the kingdom was transferred from the Jews to them ; that is, the time of the four beasts—the times of the Gentiles. Daniel speaks of the four beasts only ; Ezekiel speaks of the nations before the four beasts, and after ; but never of “the times of the Gentiles,” so called.

It is during the period comprised in the history of these four beasts that Christianity comes in, and that the moral rebellion takes place. But we have seen that the ecclesiastical power, which has been the instrument of leading to such a result, by assuming the place of God—taking away faith, and, at the same time, disgusting reason ; putting aside natural religion, and, under the pretext of the rights of revelation, corrupting and perverting this revelation itself, so that men should have no other objects than themselves—this power, I say, having played a part in the drama of iniquity, which the enemy of our souls, and of the Lord, has brought to pass, will itself fall a victim to the violence of the human will—that will which itself has withdrawn from subjection to God ; and as incapable, by its pretensions to religion, openly to serve Satan, as it is of serving God with sincerity—in one word, inca-

pable of truth, it becomes the cowardly counsellor and abetter of that iniquity of which it cannot constitute itself the actor. It provokes crimes which it dares not consummate, and of which the civil power is to be the active chief and executor. Dear friends, when the natural conscience is more upright than that resulting from religious forms, it is all over with the Church—it is near its end; and the candlestick will be removed where it serves only as the instrument of wickedness, such as the world can hardly imagine. As men say, the corruption of that which is most excellent is the worst of corruptions. As to the Antichrist properly speaking, he will deny that Jesus is the Christ; he will “deny the Father and the Son” (John ii. 22); he will not confess Jesus Christ coming in the flesh (2 John 7); he will deny everything sacred—the Father, the Son, Jesus the Messiah, Jesus come as man. We have seen his character, his acts, his form, and the source of his power. Satan will work directly by him. It will be a sort of Satanic imitation of what God has done. The Father has given the throne to the Son, and the Spirit acts according to the power of the Son in the Church before Him: in the same way the dragon (Satan) will confer the throne on the beast, and great authority; and the second beast (spiritual power, real Antichrist, and false prophet) exercises all the power of this last beast (civil power) before him. (Rev. xiii. 12.)

The judgment will decide in such a state of things. May God make us attentive to the character and to the end of the pride of man! The energy of his will is able to employ, and put to use, all the means which

God has delegated to him—and they are great; and the results, so long as God has patience with him, will be great also. But man will be the centre of all this; the feeling of his responsibility before God goes for nothing. God is, in reality, dishonoured and degraded. The end of all man's most noble, most worthy aims—God—is wanting in it all. In fine, it is the same principle and the same source—sin—from the beginning to the end. Man, acting of his own will to satisfy his lusts, ambitious of knowledge for selfish ends, exalting himself to a level with God, disobedient, and, as a consequence, acting under the influence and energy of Satan:—such is the character of Antichrist; such is the history of Adam in his first fall—his first sin. It is the commencement and consummation of the same wickedness, whose evidence and contrast appeared in the death of our beloved and perfect Saviour, who made its expiation for us. May His name of grace and glory be eternally blessed; and may He engrave these things upon our hearts! Certainly he will preserve His Church from all these evils which menace the world, for His Church is united to Him.

LECTURE VII.

READ PSALM LXXXII.

JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS, WHICH BECOME THE INHERITANCE OF CHRIST AND OF THE CHURCH.

THE last verse of this Psalm contains the subject which is to occupy us this evening: “Arise, O God, judge

the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations." It is God who is to judge the earth, and, as the consequence of this judgment, to become the possessor of all nations.

I have spoken of Christ, Heir of all things, with the Church His co-heir; then of the coming of Christ, or of the time when He will take His inheritance; and of the resurrection of the Church, or of the moment when the raised Church participates with Him in this inheritance. Even departed souls—blessed as they are with Him—wait for the resurrection of their bodies to enjoy the fulness of blessing and of glory. It is for this reason that a Christian may desire death, because he is thus delivered from all affliction and trial; but he awaits the resurrection for the consummation of his glory. We have spoken of the progress of evil, and shewn that, far from the world being converted by the preaching of the gospel, the tares are to increase and to ripen until the harvest. And we have seen the evil come to its height in the eighth head of the beast, which goes down to destruction in the apostasy of the civil power of the fourth monarchy, and in the false prophet, who, having seduced the world to do homage to the beast and to take his mark, is destroyed with him.

We have seen that there are two beasts, and that the second is transformed into the false prophet. (Compare Rev. xiii. with the end of xix.) The scene now extends itself; for not only will the fourth beast be destroyed, but the nations will be judged. All the races of men who inhabit the earth, which took their rise in the division of the children of Noah into their respective

families, will be found at the end gathered together and judged by God. All that is high and lifted up will be brought low by the power and glory of God, in order that God, in full blessing, may enjoy the kingdom, and may have the inheritance of all nations.

I have touched, at our last meeting, the most difficult part, namely, the point where the two dispensations touch, and where the evil caused by the failure of the existing one (failure, of course, on man's part) requires the intervention of God; and, as a sequel, the judgment which terminates the dispensation.

I have spoken specially of the rebellion of the beast abetted by antichrist, because it is, in fact, the consummation of the apostasy. But when this event takes place, there comes also the judgment of all nations. God does not only judge the last rebellion of the anti-christian beast; but having made his power felt—the moment of His wrath being come—He judges all nations.

This is what we read in Revelation xi. 15–18: “And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy

servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth."

Let us follow up the passages which speak on the same subject.

We before remarked, that the Lord Jesus, the Messiah, the true King over the whole earth, was presented to the fourth beast and to the Jews, that is, to the Gentiles and Jews (to the Gentiles in the person of Pontius Pilate, and to the Jews in the person of the high priest). He was presented to the world and to His own, and was rejected. But in a much more extended sense it is said, "The nations were angry, and thy wrath is come." It is the wrath of God breaking forth against them by the judgment of His Son.

Psalm ii. Two things are set forth. First, that the Son is anointed (margin) king upon Zion, God's holy hill, and that He has the heathen for His inheritance: Zion is His throne; the nations, His inheritance. Secondly, His way of dealing with the nations—a way entirely opposed to the gospel:—"Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron." The sceptre (rod) of Christ, in the gospel, is a rod of goodness and love; it is everything that is most sweet, most powerful, in His love; it is not a sceptre of iron. The Psalmist is speaking of the kings of the earth: "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; . . . kiss the Son." The decree of God is, that His Son shall be anointed, that is, declared King over all the earth; and He invites the kings of the earth to submit themselves to Him. He says to them, "I am about to speak in my wrath; I give the heritage of the

nations to Christ ; He will bruise you with a rod of iron ; He will break you in pieces : now then, submit yourselves to Him, to my Son, King in Zion." These kings follow their own ways ; their policy is settled according to the wisdom of man. Alas ! it is not of Christ, King in Zion, that they think. Go and speak to the kings of the earth of Christ, King of Zion : you would be taken for one out of his senses. Nevertheless, God has decreed His reign surely, irrevocably, and He will bring it to pass in spite of the kings of the earth ; He will establish Him King in Zion, and will give Him the nations as His heritage, and the ends of the earth for His possession. "Now," says He by the prophet Micah, "shall he be great unto the ends of the earth." (Chap. v. 4.)

At the birth of Christ, hatred burst forth upon the least appearance of His royalty. When the cry was heard that a king had appeared, immediate efforts were made to get rid of Him. Will the nations then, at last, listen to the invitation made to them to submit themselves ? The answer is to be found in Psalm lxxxii.

These judges of the earth will have to give an account of their conduct. "They know not, neither do they understand." "I have said, Ye are gods," for God Himself had set them as having authority over the earth ("the powers that be are ordained of God") ; but God can judge them. It is not Christians who hold the above language ; it is He who has the right of judging those whom He has named judges—of setting aside those subaltern powers, in order to take to Himself His great power and reign.

We find in Psalm ix. 1-7, that the place where this judgment will be exercised is the land of Israel, and that the Lord will manifest Himself in this act of power. Verse 5: "Thou hast rebuked the heathen; thou hast destroyed the wicked [Antichrist]; thou hast put out their name for ever and ever." Verse 15-20 is not the language of the gospel; it is the prophetic demand—the righteous demand—of judgment. This it is which explains those difficulties which Christians often find in the Psalms, owing to not having understood the difference of the dispensations. To convert the wicked, by the announcement of the grace of God, is the gospel; what we have been reading is something quite different. Once the gospel has run its course, Christ will demand righteous judgment against the world. It is no longer Christ, at the right hand of the Father, sending down the Holy Ghost to gather together His co-heirs; but Christ calling for righteousness and asking it (generally by His Spirit in the humble and lowly ones of the Jewish nation) against the proud and violent men. If God were not to execute judgment, the evil would only grow worse and worse without any consolation for the faithful. God does not execute it until the evil has arrived at its height. Antichrist and the nations rise up against God and His Christ, and the earth must be cleared of His enemies to give place to the reign of God Himself. It is not David asking to rule over his enemies: but Christ who demands judgment, because the time is come.

We may observe the same truth in Psalm x. 15, 16: "The Lord is King for ever and ever; the heathen are

perished out of his land." There is a general principle running through this class of Psalms, of a terrible judgment upon the wickedness of the nations—God acting as Judge in the midst of judges.

A passage in Isaiah ii. 12–22, also presents to us the great day of God upon earth: "For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is high and lofty when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth." It is not for the judgment of the dead, but of the earth.

To make you understand that this judgment applies to all nations, and that it is after this, and by this means, that God will fill the earth with the knowledge of His name, we beg you to turn to Zephaniah iii. 8: "Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger; for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy." The intention of God is to assemble the nations to pour upon them His indignation—a terrible judgment. For our expectation then, as to when the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth, we refer to verse 9. This blessing will come to pass after He shall have executed the judgment, and put away the evil-doers. This passage is a very explicit revelation.

The same truth, namely, that the knowledge of the Lord will spread by the effect of His judgment, is presented to us in Isaiah xxvi. 9–11: "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness;" for it is added, "Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn right-

eousness." Grace does not produce the effect, but judgment.

Again, we say, that the determination of Jehovah is to assemble the kingdoms, to pour out on them His indignation, and all the fierceness of His wrath. It will be a terrible day, and one which the world ought to be expecting.

Another passage in support of the truth we are urging is found in Psalm cx.: "The LORD (Jehovah) said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Jesus is set down at the right hand of God the Father, until His enemies are made His footstool. Until that time, He acts by His Spirit to gather together Christians: He sends down the Holy Ghost to convince us of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. But the day will come when God will make His enemies His footstool; and it is on this account, perhaps, that Jesus says, "Of that day knoweth no man . . . neither the Son, but the Father." (Mark xiii. 32.) It is written, that He will inherit all things. This has been prophesied of Me; Jehovah said to Me, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." It is not such a year, such a day; but I go to sit at the right hand of God until—until the moment when the Father will have accomplished this decree: for the Lord Jesus, God blessed for ever, receives the kingdom as Man-mediator. Now, as to the accomplishment of the decree, it is when "the Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion." We discern the boundary of this dispensation clearly marked, that is, Christ set down at the right hand of Jehovah, until

Jehovah puts His enemies under His feet. After that come the words, "Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." That is what Jehovah will accomplish, when the Lord, at the commencement of the exercise of His power, shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath; shall judge among the heathen; shall fill the places with the dead bodies, and shall wound the heads over many countries.*

In Jeremiah xxv. 28, the same subject is presented, and it is the end of all that we see around us: "And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup at thy hand to drink, then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Ye shall certainly drink." (See also ver. 31.)

There are yet two facts to remark on. First, it is at Jerusalem principally that all this disaster will take place; secondly, God has named in His word all the nations who will participate in it. We shall see all the descendants of Noah, of whom we have the catalogue in Genesis x., reappear on the scene at the moment of this judgment of God. We shall find nearly all of them under the beast or under Gog.

As to the passages which concern Jerusalem, we may cite Joel iii. 1, 9-17; Micah iv. 11 to the end of the chapter; and Zechariah xii. 3-11: "And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people; all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. In that day, saith the Lord, I will

* Or rather, chief over a great land.

smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness ; and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah ; and will smite every horse of the people with blindness. And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the Lord of hosts their God. In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf ; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left : and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem. The Lord also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David, and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, do not magnify themselves against Judah. In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem : and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David ; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications ; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon." Chapter xiv. 3, 4 : " Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in

that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south."

It is said (Acts i.) Jesus "shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven," that is, upon the Mount of Olives. (Compare Ezek. xi. 23.) "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives," says the Holy Ghost in Zechariah xiv. 4; "his feet," the feet of Jehovah. Though indeed He was the man of sorrows, Jesus is Jehovah, and has been so from eternity.

As to the second point on which we have to remark, namely, that the nations, the descendants of Noah, will be ranged either under the beast or under Gog—the two principal powers; if you consult Genesis x. you will read (ver. 5), "By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands." In the generations of the sons of Japheth are named Gomer,* Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Mesec, and Tiras. Of these we get Gomer, Magog, Tubal, Mesec, under the same names in Ezekiel xxxviii. as followers of Gog; you will also find there Persia which was united to Media (Madai), and from whose hands it received the crown (as we are told in Daniel viii. and other places), so that there only remain Javan and Tiras to be accounted for. Those mentioned above are the nations which comprise Russia,

* See Hales's *Analysis of Chronology*, vol. i., pp. 352, 357.

Asia Minor, Tartary, and Persia (all the people, in short, of which the empire of Russia is composed, or which are under its influence). They are described as under the dominion of Gog, prince of Rosh (the Russians), Mesec (Moscow), and Tubal (Tobolsk).

The children of Ham are pointed out in Genesis x. 6. Of these, Canaan has been destroyed, and his country turned over to Israel; Cush (Ethiopia) and Phut are also found (Ezek. xxxviii. 5; see margin) under Gog; those of Cush only in part, and for the reason that one part of the family of Cush established itself on the Euphrates, the other on the Nile,* that is, north and south of Israel. Those of the north are then, by their position, in direct relation with the partisans of Gog. Mizraim, or Egypt (for Mizraim is none other than the Hebrew name for Egypt), and the remainder of Cush and the Libyans, you will find in the scenes of the last day. (Dan. xi. 43.)

As to the children of Shem (Gen. x. 22), Elam is the same as Persia, of which we have already spoken. Asshur is named in the judgment, which will take place in the last times (Micah v. 6; Isa. xiv. 25; xxx. 33); also in the conspiracy of Psalm lxxxiii., and in other places. Arphaxad is one of the ancestors of the Israelites. We know nothing of the family of Joktan. It is supposed to be a people of the East. Aram, or Syria, was displaced by Asshur, and is found under the title of the king of the North. The same remarks, it appears, may be made of Lud. Javan (Greece)

* See Note, p. 142.

is to be in the last combat. (Zech. ix. 13.) Of all the nations, Tiras is the only one besides Joktan, which is not named as to be in this great judgment. We speak only of the word of God. Profane authors unite Tiras and Javan in Greece ; but with this we have not to do.

In the present day, we may observe Russia extending her power exactly over the nations who will be found under Gog.*

Daniel xi. introduces us to two other powers, to which we must direct our regards ; they are the king of the South, and the king of the North. The chapter contains a long account of already accomplished events, as to their wars, &c. ; but after this come the ships of Chittim (ver. 30), and then there is an interruption in their history. These kings were the successors of the great king of Javan (Greece) : the one, possessor of Assyria ; the other, of Egypt. The object of their fightings was Syria and the Holy Land. In verse 31—35, the Jews are introduced as set aside during a long period of time. (See ver. 33.) It is said, “And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end ; because it is yet for a time appointed ;” and then (ver. 36), “And the king shall do according to his own will :” this is Antichrist. In verse 41, we have him in the land of Israel, in that territory which is the cause of the difference which exists between the king of

* We must take care to distinguish the Gog of Ezekiel from the Gog and Magog in the Revelation.

the North and the king of the South. "And at the time of the end, shall the king of the South push at him." That is, after a long interval, behold again the king of the South brought, in this chapter, upon the scene. And this has historically occurred only four years ago, after an interval of nearly two thousand years. The greater part of the nations who, as we are told, are to be at the feet of Gog, are now coming under the dominion of Russia; "and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind." Antichrist will be the object of the attack, at one and the same time, of the king of the South, or Egypt; and of the king of the North, the possessor of Asiatic Turkey, or Assyria. I do not say who the king of the North will be at the end; but we see that the circumstances and the personages described in the prophecies which have reference to this time appointed—"the time of the end" begin to appear. It is nearly two thousand years since there has been a king of the South; and it is but a few years that he has appeared anew. In the same way a great people has appeared, of which the world a century ago hardly knew the existence, and which now rules over the exact countries of the Gog in Ezekiel. We do not desire that you should fix your attention too much upon events which are taking place in our time; it is only when we have explained the prophecy, that we advert to the circumstances which pass around us. All nations have their attention occupied about Jerusalem (Zech. xii. 3), and know not what to do about it. The king of Egypt wants to call the whole country his own; the king of the North is unwilling to cede it (the Turk being the

actual king of the North, or Assyria). The kings of the North and South dispute for the same country, which they fought over two thousand years ago. This is just what the prophecy says is to occur at "a time appointed." We do not mean that all this yet comes out plain ; for example, the ten kings cannot be enumerated and Antichrist has not yet appeared. But the principles which are found in the word of God are acting in the midst of the kingdoms where the ten horns are to appear: that is, we find all western Europe occupied about Jerusalem, and preparing for war ; and Russia, on her side, preparing herself, and exercising influence over the countries given to her in the word ; and all the thoughts of the politicians of this world* concentrate themselves on the scene where their final gathering in the presence of the judgment of God will take place—where "the Lord shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor." (Micah iv. 12.) It is a remarkable coincidence. In observing what is passing around us, we recognize certain prophetic descriptions ; at least we see those who are to act, or upon whom God will act, developing the characters which prophecy signalizes.

If you take the trouble, dear friends, to follow the chapters which we have been quoting (many others, as doubtless there are), you will understand Matthew xxv. which speaks of the Lord sitting upon His throne, and gathering all the nations (an allusion to Joel iii.), judging

* Every one is aware how much more largely this is the case since, and that the dispute about the holy places has been the occasion of the Eastern war. The nations are burdening themselves with Jerusalem. (Note to fourth edition.)

them, and separating them "as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats."*

Let us remember one thing ; it is, that we Christians are sheltered from the approaching storm. We have said nothing this evening about the Church ; but let us recall its place to our memory. It is, that during these events (yea, even at present, as united to Him by faith), its place is to be with Christ, to accompany Him ; the Church has this privilege, this glory, this special character, that of union with the Lord Jesus Christ ; and if we search for the Church in the Old Testament, it is Jesus Christ we find. A striking example of this truth is found in Paul's quotation (Rom. viii.), taken from Isaiah l. where Christ says, "Who is he that shall con-

* It is commonly supposed that the judgment which is spoken of in this chapter is the last judgment—the general judgment: this is a mistake. It is the judgment of the nations living upon this earth, and not of the dead. There is no question of the resurrection, but only of the judgment of the Gentiles. What will happen to the Jews is mentioned in chapter xxiv. ; then, what will happen to believers, or at least professors of the faith of Christ ; and then, the fate of the Gentiles. It is the judgment of the living, and not of the dead. We say it is the judgment of the living, because we read, "Before him shall be gathered all nations ; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats." That which has given rise to the supposition that it is the judgment of the dead, is this passage, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal ;" but this only means, that the judgment the living will be final, like that of the dead. When God judges, whether the dead or the living, His judgment sends the good into life eternal, and the wicked into everlasting punishment. The judgment of the living is as sure as that of the dead.

demn me?" which Paul applies to the Church, the Church being united to Christ.

The union of the Church in a single body, whether Jews or Gentiles, was not revealed in the Old Testament; if we seek for it, it is Christ Himself that we find. Although there are many things in the relationship of Jehovah with Zion, which also exist between God the Father and the Church, nevertheless it is not in Zion that we are to look for the Church. In the Old Testament, the privileges of the Church are in Christ Himself, in the person of Christ, because the Church has the same portion as Christ. This is it (see Eph. i. 22, 23), "which is the fulness of him that filleth all in all:" for this reason we are not to look for the Church in the prophecies. The Church is the body of Christ Himself; and Christ is to judge, not to be judged. We have seen that Christ is to smite, to break in pieces the nations; this is said also of the Church. The Church has nothing to do with that of which we have been speaking, as if it were to be subjected to the same judgments. (Rev. ii. 26, 27.) Its place is not to be in the midst of the nations that are to be broken in pieces, but to be united to Christ, enjoying the same privileges as Christ, and breaking to pieces the nations with Christ. There is nothing true, as regards Christ, in the glory which He has taken, which is not also true of the Church.

It is always precious for us thus to understand our place, that of joint-heirs with Christ. And the more we think of this, the more our strength will be increased, and the more we shall become in our minds, as heirs of

God, detached from this world, which is judged, as, indeed, the Church is justified. The Church is justified; we see not yet the effects of it, because the glory is not come. The Church only has the fruits of justification in glory; the world only has the fruits of wickedness in the judgment. Nevertheless, it is true that the Church is united to Christ. The world is judged because it has rejected Christ. "Holy Father," said the Saviour, "the world hath not known thee." But this is what grace has done for us. Just as unbelief separates men entirely and for all eternity from Christ, grace by faith has united us entirely and for ever to Him; and we ought to bless God for it.

LECTURE VIII.

READ ROMANS XI.

ISRAEL'S FIRST ENTRY INTO THE LAND WAS THE
RESULT OF PROMISE.

WE have, in Romans xi. 1, this question put by the apostle as to Israel: "Hath God cast away his people?" As far as chapter viii. he has been detailing the history of us all as men, whether Jews or Gentiles; he has fully stated the gospel of the grace of God, namely, the reconciliation of man by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. After having established this point, he begins in chapter ix. the history of the dispensations: he makes known the manner in which God has acted towards the Jews and the Gentiles; and in this chapter

xi. he starts the question, "Hath God cast away his people?"

We have seen, in studying the history of the four beasts, and also that of the Church, that the Jews were put aside; and that the gospel has appeared in the world to save sinners, whether Jews or Gentiles, in order to reveal the hidden mystery of a heavenly people, and that "unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known, by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God." A Jew, who is now converted, enters into the dispensation of grace; but upon this comes the immediate inquiry, "Hath God cast away his people?"

It is not concerning His spiritual people that the question is asked, but concerning His people according to the flesh—His people, the Jews. The apostle says (ver. 28), "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes." In this chapter xi. the gospel is not in view,—namely, the calling of the Jews, as a people, into grace by the gospel—although, indeed, there is a gospel election from among this people; but the question treated is that of the Jews, as God's manifested people, of Jews according to the flesh, who are enemies as to the gospel, but beloved on the principle of a national election on account of the fathers.

Because, then, the gospel has come in, has God rejected His people? Does He count them enemies? The answer of the apostle is, "God forbid."

We Christians boast of this, that "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance;" well we may—it is a

scriptural principle : but to whom does the apostle apply it? Not to us, but to the Jews. It is always important to consider the context of every passage of the word of God, and not to force it out of the situation where God has placed it.

The present is the dispensation of the calling of a heavenly people, and, in consequence, God puts aside His earthly people, the Jews. The Jewish nation is never to enter into the Church; on the contrary, "blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in;—until all the children of God, out of them composing the body of the Church in this dispensation, are called.

Israel, as a nation, will be saved. "There shall come out of Zion the deliverer." He has not cast away His people. As touching the gospel they are enemies, and they will so remain until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in : but the Deliverer will come. This is a summary of the divine purpose as regards the Jews.

From the moment it can be affirmed of the dispensation of the Gentiles, that it has not "continued in the goodness of God," we can say that, sooner or later, it will be cut off. "Toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness ; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."

The root of the olive-tree is not alone Israel under the law ; far from it. It is Abraham, to whom the call of God was addressed. It was the calling of a single man, separated, elect, the depositary of the promises. The choice fell upon Abraham, and upon the family of Abraham according to the flesh. Israel has served for

an example, as depositary of the promises and of the manifestation of the election of God ; now it is the Church which so serves.

In order to make you understand the *root* of the promises, which is Abraham, I will touch upon the series of dispensations which preceded.

First, at the fall of man we see him left to himself. Although not without witness, he had neither law nor government ; and, as a consequence, evil was carried to the highest pitch, so that the world was full of violence and corruption ; and God purified it by the deluge.

Afterwards came Noah. A change took place ; it was this—that the right of life and death, the right of taking vengeance, was given into the hands of men : “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, *by man* shall his blood be shed.” To this is added a blessing to the earth, greater or less. “The same,” said Lamech, in speaking of Noah, “shall comfort us . . . because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed ;” and a covenant is made by God with Noah and with the creation ; a covenant in witness of which God gives the rainbow. “The Lord smelled a sweet savour ; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground.” (Gen. viii. 21 ; ix. 6, 12, 13.) This was the covenant given to the earth immediately after the sacrifice of Noah, the type of the sacrifice of Christ.

It may be said, in passing, that Noah failed in this covenant, as man always has done. Instead of drawing blessings out of the earth by tillage, he begins to cultivate the vine, and gets intoxicated. By this forgetfulness and fault of his, the proper principle of government

also lost its power in its first elements. Noah, who held its reins, became the subject of the derision of one of his sons.

We see in all dispensations the immediate failure of man; but that which is lost in all of them by human folly will find its recovery at the end in Christ; whether it be blessing to the earth, prosperity to the Jews, or the glory of the Church. All that has appeared and has been spoiled, under the keeping of the first Adam, will blossom again under that of the Second Adam, Bridegroom of the Church, and King of the Jews and of the whole earth.

Another still more signal failure took place after Noah's. God had made His judgments terribly felt in the deluge, and His providence was thus revealed. What did Satan do? As long as he is unbound he takes possession of the state of things here below. No sooner did God manifest Himself in His providential judgments, than Satan presented himself also as God; he made himself, as it were, God. Is it not written, "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils and not to God?" Satan made himself the god of this earth. Joshua xxiv. 2: "Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time . . . and they served *other gods*," said the Lord to the Israelites. It is the first time that we find God marking the existence of *idolatry*. When it made its appearance, God calls Abraham; and thus, for the first time, appears the call of God to an outward separation from the state of things here below; because Satan having introduced himself as influencing the thoughts of man, as the one whom man

was to invoke, it was necessary that the true God should have a people separated from other people, where the truth might be preserved ; and consequently all the ways of God towards men turn upon this point—that here below God called Abraham and his posterity to be the depositary of this great truth, “There are none other gods but one.” (See Deut. iv. 35.) Consequently, all the doings of God upon the earth have reference entirely and directly to the Jews, as the centre of His earthly counsels and of His government. This is shewn us in Deuteronomy xxxii. 8. It was according to the number of the children of Israel that the bounds of the nations were set. It was with reference to Israel that He gave them their habitations.

You will see also these two principles distinctly presented in the word ; on one side, the promises made to Abraham without condition ; and on the other, Israel receiving them under condition, and so losing all. But as Abraham received the promises without condition, God cannot forget them, although Israel may have failed in the conditions which they engaged for. And this is very important ; for if God had failed in His promises towards Abraham, He could fail also in His promises towards us.

It was at Sinai that Israel received the promises under condition, and failed ; but this in no wise weakened the validity and the force of the promises made to Abraham four hundred years before. I am not now alluding to the spiritual promise, “All nations shall be blessed in thee,” which has found a partial fulfilment by the gospel in this dispensation ; but I allude

to the promises made to *Israel*, which rest on the same faithfulness of God.

Let us begin our citations upon this subject out of Genesis xii. The chapter is the call of Abraham, who was then in the midst of his idolatrous family. The terms of the promise are very general; but they contain earthly blessings as well as purely spiritual ones. The two kinds are found in the same verse equally without condition. The spiritual part of the promise is only once repeated (chap. xxii.), and that to the seed; not so the temporal ones. In chapter xv. we have the promise founded upon a covenant made with Abraham, also without condition; it is an absolute gift of the country. Here is also found that of a numerous posterity (ver. 5, 18); and even the exact limits of the country given. (Ver. 18; and following.) In chapter xvii. 7, 8, the promise of the earth is renewed. These are confirmed to Isaac (chap. xxvi. 3, 4), and to Jacob (chap. xxxv. 10, 12). Here are "the promises made unto the fathers," and to Israel, "beloved for the *fathers'* sakes:" they are made to Abraham, whether spiritual or temporal, without any condition.

If you say that the spiritual promises are without condition, by parity of reasoning the temporal ones are. There is as much certainty in the promise made to Abraham, "To thee will I give this land," as in those which have been made in favour of us Gentiles.

There is no need to cite the wrestling of Jacob. It is, in general, thought to be a proof of extraordinary faith in him. This is true; but, at the same time, it is a faith which, exerted after conduct much

to be reprehended, was to be accompanied by an evident humiliation. It was God who wrestled with him; but God also sustained his faith. So shall it be with Israel at the end; they shall feel the effect of leaning on the flesh; but God shall take this controversy into His own hands, and bless them after all.

Thus God made Himself "*the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob*" — heirs of the promises, and pilgrims upon earth.

We shall see that in this name, God, as it were, makes His boast on the earth, and that the faithful in Israel ever find in it the motives of their confidence. "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." (Ex. iii. 15.)

But in another point of view, Israel placed themselves in relationship with God in a way which is opposed to all that; namely, their own righteousness—the principle of the law—by virtue of which, acknowledging that we owe obedience to God, we undertake the doing of it in our own strength; for the history of the people of Israel is, whether in its largeness or details, but the history of our hearts.

Exodus xix. Here was an immense change taking place in the state of Israel: until then the promise made to them had been unconditional. If you cast your eyes over the chapters, from xv. to xix., you will find that God had given them all things gratuitously, and even in spite of their murmurings; as the manna, water to

drink, the sabbath, &c.; and that he had sustained them in their combat with Amalek at Rephidim. He recalls all this to their memory: "Ye have seen," says he to them, "how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself; now therefore, if" This is the first time, in the relationship between God and Israel, that the little word *if* is introduced. "Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me; for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation."

But the moment a condition comes in, our ruin is certain, for we fail the first day; and this was the foolishness of Israel. In vain God gives His law, which is "holy, and just, and good." To a sinner His law is death, because he is a sinner; and from the moment that God gives His law conditionally—namely, that something is to come to us by keeping it—He gives it, not because we can obey it, but to make us more clearly comprehend that we are lost because we have violated it.

The Israelites should have said, It is true, most gracious God, we ought to obey Thee; but we have failed so often, that we dare not receive the promise under such a condition. Instead of this, what was their language? "All the words that the Lord hath said, will we do." They bind themselves to fulfil all that Jehovah had spoken; they take the promises under the condition of perfect obedience. What is the consequence of such rashness? The golden calf was made before Moses had come down from the mount. When

we sinners engage ourselves to obey God without any failure (although obedience is always a duty), and to forfeit the blessing if we do not, we are sure to fail. Our answer should always be, "We are lost;" for grace supposes our ruin. It is this entire instability of man under any condition, that the apostle wishes to shew (Gal. iii. 17-21) when he says, "A mediator is not a mediator of one." That is, from the instant there is a mediator, there are two parties. But God is not two; "God is one." And who is the other party? It is man. Hence the accomplishment depends on the stability of man, as well as of God; and all comes to nothing.

There being nothing stable in man, he has of course sunk under the weight of his engagements; and this is what must always happen. But the law cannot annul the promises made to Abraham; the law, which was 430 years after, cannot abolish the promise; and the promise was made to Abraham, not only of a blessing to the nations, but also of the land, and of earthly blessings to Israel. The reasoning of the apostle, as to spiritual promises, applies equally to temporal promises made to the Jews. We see that Israel could not enjoy them under the law. In fact, all was lost as soon as the golden calf was made. Yet the covenant at Sinai was founded on the principle of obedience. Exodus xxiv. 7: "And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood" Here is a covenant ratified by blood—and upon this foundation—"We will do all that the Lord hath said." You know that the people made the

golden calf, and that Moses in consequence destroyed the tables of the law.

In Exodus xxxii. we see how the promises made before the law were the resource of faith. It was this which sustained the people by the intercession of Moses, even in ruin itself: and by means of a mediator God returned to man after his failure. (Vers. 9, 10.) "It is a stiffnecked people: now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them; and I will make of thee a great nation." Then Moses besought the Lord: "Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people."

Thus, after the fall of Israel, Moses beseeches God, for His own glory, to remember the promises made to Abraham; and God repents of the evil which He had thought to do.

Turn to Leviticus xxvi. This chapter is the threat of all the chastisements which were to follow the unfaithfulness of Israel. Verse 42: "Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham; . . . and I will remember the land."*

* See also, for this appeal to promises apart from conditions, Deuteronomy ix. 5, 27; x. 15. In Micah vii. 19, 20, these

God returns to His promises made unconditionally long before the law ; and this is applicable to the last times, as we shall presently see.

There are two more covenants made with Israel during their wanderings in the wilderness. That under the law having been broken, the intercession of Moses made way for another (Ex. xxxiii. 14, 19), of which we have the basis in Exodus xxxiv. 27 : "And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words ; for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel." Observe, *with thee* ; for there is a remarkable change in the language of God. In Egypt, God had always said, "My people, my people." But when the golden calf was made, He uses the word which they had used — "Thy people which thou broughtest up out of the land of Egypt ;" for Israel had said, "This Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt." (Ex. xxxii. 1.) God takes them up in their own words. What happened? Moses interceded, and, so to speak, he would not permit God to say "Thy people," as of him ; but he insisted upon *Thy people*, as of God's people.

Now then, it is a covenant made with Moses, as mediator. Here comes in the sovereignty of grace, introduced indeed when all was lost (the condition of the law having been violated). If God had not been sovereign, what would have been the consequence of this infraction?

same promises made to Abraham constitute the prophetic hope. And the faithful Israelite, Simeon (Luke ii. 25, &c.), recalls them as the ground of confidence to Israel, who, in these promises, might rest on the faithfulness of God.

The destruction of all the people. That is, though the sovereignty of God is eternal, it is revealed when it becomes the only resource of a people lost by their own ways; and this sovereignty manifests itself through the means of a mediator.

There is still another covenant in Deuteronomy xxix. 1: "These are the words of the covenant which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which he made with them in Horeb." And the subject of this third covenant with the Israelites is this;—God makes it with them, in order that under it they, being obedient, might be able to continue to enjoy the land.

They did not keep it, and so they were expelled the territory. They were installed in it at the epoch of this third covenant, and by the keeping of it they would have been maintained there. (See vers. 9, 12, 19.)

Thus we get the principle on which they entered at all into the land of Canaan. But we have also seen that before the law God had promised them the land for a perpetual possession, by covenants and promises made without condition; and it is owing to these promises, by the mediation of Moses, that Israel was spared, and at last enjoyed the land—enjoyed it, we say, on the terms of the third covenant, made in the plains of Moab.

After the fall of the Israelites in this promised land, there remains still to be applied to them, as to their re-establishment, all the promises made to Abraham. After this people had failed in every possible way towards God, the prophets shew us clearly that God has promised again to restore them, and to establish them in their

land, under the Lord Jesus Christ, as their King, to receive in Him the full accomplishment of every temporal promise.

Let us recollect, dear friends, that all we have been going through is the revelation of the character of Jehovah; and that, though truly these things have happened to Israel, they have happened to them on the part of God; and that they are, as a consequence, the manifestation of the character of God in Israel for us. It is not only of the failure of Israel that we are to think, but of the goodness of God—our God. Israel is the theatre upon which God has displayed all His character; but not alone is Israel to be considered, the glory of God and the honour of His perfections are concerned. If God could fail in His gifts towards Israel, He could fail in his gifts towards us.

We shall have yet, on another occasion, to continue our account of this people.

LECTURE IX.

READ EZEKIEL XXXVII.

ISRAEL'S FAILURE AND DISPERSION; PROMISES OF RESTORATION.

THAT which happens to the dry bones seen by Ezekiel exhibits very forcibly the matter to be treated of this evening; namely, what God in His goodness will yet do in favour of Israel. We shall follow our usual method of giving a succession of passages out of

the word of God upon it. You remember, that in commencing this subject, we remarked the difference between the covenant made with Abraham, and the covenant of the law given on Mount Sinai; and that whenever God was going to shew grace to His people, He called to mind the covenant made with Abraham. We also remarked that Israel took the promises under the covenant made in the wilderness, and not under that made with Abraham; and that, from that time Israel, being put under the condition of obedience in order to persevere in the enjoyment of the promises, failed altogether; but that, notwithstanding, thanks to the mediation of Moses, God was able to bless the people.

We shall have to see how *Israel failed again after that, even when established in the land which the Lord had given to them*; and that God raised up prophets, in a way altogether apart from His necessary dealings with them, to convict them of the sin into which they had fallen, and to shew the faithful ones that the counsels of God towards Israel would not be put aside; for that by means of the Messiah He would accomplish all that which He had spoken. We shall see also that it was just when Israel would fail that these promises of their re-establishment would become precious to the faithful remnant of the people.

Let us remember that in the history of the sin of Israel under the law, we have the history of every heart among us; that if we place ourselves before God, we shall recognize that it is only the grace which is known to us by the work of God, which can not only

sustain us in, but relieve us from, the situation in which we find ourselves in consequence of sin.

I am going to look through the decline and ruin of Israel under every form of its government, from the time of the entry into the land of Canaan. It was Joshua who led them. The book of this name is the history of the victories of Israel over the Canaanites—the history of the faithfulness of God in the accomplishment of all that He had promised to His people. The Judges and Samuel are the history of the failure of Israel in the land of Canaan until David, but, at the same time, of the patience of God. First, then, how does Joshua describe the Israelites—their condition and character?

In chapter xxiv. he recites all that God had done on their behalf—all His favours, and all His goodness; upon which (ver. 16) the people answer, “God forbid that we should forsake the Lord.” In verse 19, Joshua says to the people, “Ye cannot serve the Lord:” and the people say, “Nay, but we will serve the Lord;” “The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.” “So [ver. 25] Joshua made a covenant with the people that day.” This captain of their salvation led them into the land of promise; they enjoy the fruits of grace, and they anew undertake to obey the Lord.

In Judges ii. they are found in complete failure, and in consequence God says, “I will not drive out your enemies from before you, but they shall be as thorns in your sides.” Verses 11, 14: “And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim; and the anger of the Lord was hot against

Israel." It is always the same picture—kindness on the part of God, ingratitude on that of man.

Let us now turn to some passages which detail the transgressions of Israel under every form of government.

1 Samuel iv. 11. Eli was the high priest, the judge and head of Israel, yet was the glory of Israel cast down to the ground: "the ark of God taken, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phineas, were slain." (Vers. 18, 21.) Eli himself died, and his daughter-in-law named the child which was born of her, Ichabod, saying, "The glory is departed from Israel (because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father-in-law and her husband)."

After this, God, who raised up Samuel, the first of the prophets (Acts iii. 24; xiii. 20), governs Israel by him: but Israel soon rejected him. (1 Sam. viii. 6, 7.) "And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them, according to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day." It was then that God "gave them a king in his anger;" and we know what befell the king of their choice. (1 Sam. xv. 26.) The judgment is pronounced; Samuel says to Saul, "I will not return with thee; for thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel."

These extracts are sufficient for our purpose. Israel has failed under king, prophet, and priest. They are ruined under the king whom they had chosen.

David is raised up in the place of Saul: God made this choice in His dealings in grace. David—type of Christ, as He is the father of Christ according to the flesh—was His gift to Israel.

Thus it is solely by the goodness of God that Israel becomes rich and glorious under David and Solomon. But still this people transgressed afresh under these two princes (1 Kings xi. 9, 11); “And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel.”*

It is an unhappy subject to dwell on—this constant distaste of man’s heart for God, under every condition in which he is placed; and this is the instruction which we ought to draw from the history of the children of Israel. They subsequently divided themselves into two distinct parts, and the ten tribes became altogether unfaithful. It was in the person of Ahaz that the family of David, the last human stay of the hopes of Israel (for after its fall nothing but God’s promises remained), began to become idolaters. (2 Kings xvi. 10, 14.) The sin of Manasseh put the finishing stroke to all their misconduct. (Kings xxi. 1, 14.)

Such, in a few words, was the behaviour of Israel, and even of Judah, until the captivity of Babylon. The Spirit of God sums up the history of their crimes, and of His patience, in this impressive language (2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16): “And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and

* And the royalty, raised up of God Himself, thus failed, and judgment passed upon it, though a lamp was reserved to David in Jerusalem till the days of Zedekiah.

sending ; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place : but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy.”

This was the end of their existence in the land of Canaan, into which they had been introduced by Joshua. The name of *Lo-ammi* (not my people) is at last written upon them.

Having thus rapidly run through the history of their fall until their deportation to Babylon, let us consider the promises which sustained a faithful remnant among them during this prevalence of iniquity, and during the captivity of the nation.

There is a prominent one to be noted, which served as a kind of pedestal, on which the faithful Jews might build their expectations. It is to be found in 2 Samuel vii. and 1 Chronicles xvii. Between the two there is this difference ; in 1 Chronicles xvii. the application is made directly to Christ, which is not quite so plainly seen in 2 Samuel vii. ; and this distinction holds good as to the matter of the books themselves, of which the one (Samuel) is historical, and the other (the Chronicles) a synopsis, or *résumé*, which connects all the history genealogically from Adam to Christ, and to the hopes of Israel ; and from which book, consequently, all the transgressions and falls of the kings of Israel are excluded. (Compare 2 Sam. vii. 14 with 1 Chron. xvii. 13.) This is the promise (2 Sam. vii. 10), “Moreover, I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them that they may dwell in a place of

their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more as beforetime." 1 Chronicles xvii. 11-13: "And it shall come to pass, when thy days be expired, that thou must go to be with thy fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build me an house, and I will establish his throne for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son." In Hebrews i. 5 application is made of these words to Christ; that is, all the promises made to Abraham and to his seed—all the promises made to Israel—are placed in the safe keeping, and gathered together in the person, of the Son of David.

We have now, dear friends, seen the promise made to David, which is the foundation of all those which concern the family of that name.

We have seen the failure of the people, and also the promise made to the Son of David—to the Messiah. Let us pursue the study from the direct testimony of the prophets.

Isaiah i. 25-28 decrees the full restoration of the Jews; but by judgments which cut off the wicked.

Chapter iv. 2-4. "In that day (time of great trouble) shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of

Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.” Chapter vi. of the same book gives us full entrance into the spirit of prophecy. It was at the moment when Ahaz came to the throne—the same Ahaz who sent the heathen altar from Damascus to Jerusalem—that Isaiah is sent to meet this king, the son of David, who introduced apostasy. The first thing we have presented to us is the manifested glory of Christ, the Lord thrice holy (we have the interpretation of St. John as to this, in chapter xii. of his Gospel); that glory which condemns the entire nation, but which produces, by grace, the spirit of intercession, to which the mercy which re-establishes the nation is the answer—mercy, notwithstanding, which finds no accomplishment, until the wicked are got rid of from the people and the land, after a state of prolonged hardening on their part carried to its utmost height, in the rejection of Jesus Christ and of the testimony given to Him by the Spirit in the apostles. (Read Isaiah vi. 9—13.)

Isaiah xi. 10: “In that day there shall be a root of Jesse to it shall the Gentiles seek.” Here we learn how and when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord; it is after He has slain the wicked “by the breath of his lips.” Then “the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people.” (Read ver. 9—12.)

Isaiah xxxiii. 20, 24; xlix. It has been asserted that in these chapters Zion means the Church; but when all the joy is come, “Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me.” Impossible, if Zion be the Church.

What! the Church forsaken in the midst of its joy? * Read Isaiah xlix. 14—23; also chapter lxxii., which likewise applies to Israel; also chapter lxxv. 10—25, where there can be no question, but of earthly blessings—such as are hitherto unknown on earth. In that day God Himself will rejoice over Jerusalem.

These are some of the promises which plainly announce the forthcoming glory of the Jewish people and of Jerusalem. But there are others still more direct. Jeremiah iii. 16—18: “It shall come to pass when ye be multiplied,” &c. Certain foreshadowings have happened, which have looked like the accomplishment of many of the prophecies relating to their restoration; as, for example, the return of the people from Babylon; but God has given His own marks; He has linked circumstances together which have never yet had their fulfilment; as, in this passage, “All the nations shall be gathered unto it.” It is certain that this did not take place at the return from Babylon. But you will reply, It is the Church. No; for “in those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together . . . to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers.” We see, in a word,

* If Zion means the Church, the gathering of all, and the joy of the heavens and the earth, would be necessarily the Church's joy; for that gathering would constitute the Church's joy. Therefore the supposition of its desertion would be ridiculous; whereas the chapter, if we suppose desertion of the literal city Zion, when the gathering takes place, is very intelligible; but the Lord goes on to say, that she shall be the centre of blessings, for that He can never forget her.

three things happening together, which most surely have not had as yet a simultaneous accomplishment: namely, Jerusalem the throne of Jehovah; Judah and Israel united; and the nations assembled to the throne of God. When the Church was founded, Israel was dispersed; when Israel returned from Babylon, there was neither Church nor assemblage of nations.

Jeremiah xxx. 7—11: "It is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him; but they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid." These happy times for Israel have assuredly not yet been realized.

Chapter xxxi. 23, 27, 28, 31, unto the end. Remark verse 28. Who is it that the Lord has broken down, thrown down, and destroyed? The same that He will build and plant. It is a little unreasonable to apply all the judgments to Israel, and all the blessings which concern the same persons to the Church. And if the Church be indeed here spoken of, what is the meaning of "from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner," "the hill Gareb," &c.? Observe, also, the last words of the chapter: "It shall not be plucked up nor thrown down any more for ever."

Chapter xxxii. 37—42. Touching passage as to the thoughts of the Lord concerning His people! After having given them promises of blessings in grace, and assured them that He would be their God, the Lord says, "And I will plant them in this land assuredly, with my

whole heart and with my whole soul. For like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them."

Jeremiah xxxiii. 6—11, 15, 25, 26. This is again the blessing of Israel—of Jerusalem: and that by the presence of the Branch, which shall grow up unto David, who shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. Let us remember, dear friends, that the word of God in no way presents to us the Holy Spirit as the Branch of David, nor His office as that of executing judgment upon the earth. On the other hand, if you insist upon this chapter applying to the restoration from Babylon, I would quote Nehemiah ix. 36, 37: "Behold, we are servants this day . . . and we are in great distress," as shewing how little the return from Babylon was the fulfilment of all these promises we have been reading. Was that restoration the whole heart and the whole soul of God in favour of His people? We have seen the estimation in which the Spirit of God held that event. No: these promises of God were not at that time accomplished. (Ezek. xi. 16—20.) Until this day, Israel, or rather the Jews, are under the judgment which the first part of this passage imports. "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none." (Matt. xii. 43.) The closing verses speak of their last state, in which they are subjected to judgment; and at that time (ver. 19) God gives a new heart to the remnant, the nucleus of the future nation.

In Ezekiel xxxiv. 22 to the end of the chapter we have

David their king in the midst of them, and their blessings immovable.

Ezekiel xxxvi. 22—32. If you make the objection, These are spiritual things in which we participate, I answer, Yes, we participate in the blessings of the good olive-tree; but our joy has not dispossessed the Jew (the natural branch) of that which belongs to him. Why are we made partakers? Because we are grafted into Christ. If we are Christ's, we are Abraham's children, and partake of all that is spiritual.

“Ye shall dwell in the land that I gave your fathers.” (Ver. 21.) The Church has only one Father, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I would now remark, for a moment in passing on our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus (John iii. particularly ver. 12), where there is an allusion to “earthly things.” Previously (ver. 10), He had said, “Art thou a master [teacher] in Israel, and knowest not these things?”—namely, the need of being born of water and of the Spirit to enter into the kingdom of God. This knowledge was to be got out of the Old Testament, the source whence the teachers drew their instruction. The passage just quoted out of Ezekiel contains almost the very same words used by our Lord. How! says He, you a master (teacher) in Israel! you ought to understand that Israel must have a new and purified heart in order to enjoy the promises. How is it that you know not these things? If you enter not into my saying that you must be born of water and of the Spirit, and do not understand these earthly things, how can it be expected that you should believe about heavenly things? As if

He had said, If I have spoken to you of the things which apply to Israel, if I have told you that Israel must be born again to enjoy those *terrestrial promises which belong to her*, and you have not understood me, how will you comprehend about heavenly things—about the glory of Christ exalted in heaven, and the Church, His companion, in this heavenly glory? You have not even understood the doctrines of your prophets. You a teacher in Israel! you should at least have made yourself acquainted with the earthly things, of which Ezekiel and others have spoken.

In this chapter of Ezekiel, as in many others, expressions are found, such as “fruit of trees”—“increase of the field”—details of earthly things, which are the earthly blessings promised to Israel; whilst, at the same time, the necessity of a new heart is connected with them, in order that those to whom these promises belong may be able to enjoy them. Israel must be renewed in heart to receive the promises of Canaan. God must cause them to walk in His statutes by giving them a new heart, and then, but only then, they will enjoy the blessings foretold for them.

Ezekiel xxxvii. gives a detailed history of the re-establishment of Israel—the joining together of the two parts of the nation, their return into the land, and their state of unity and fidelity to God in this same land; God being their God, and David their king being present—present for ever, in such a way as that the nations shall know that their God is the Lord, when His sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.

Chapter xxxix. 22—25. It is evident that the time

here mentioned is not yet come ; since, when it does, God “will not hide his face any more from them,” as He is doing at the present time, and that He will gather them “unto their own land,” and will leave none of them among the heathen.

In conclusion, let us call to mind the great principles upon which these prophecies rest. The restoration of the Jews is founded upon the promises made to Abraham *without* condition ; their fall is the result of their having undertaken to act in their own strength. After having exercised the patience of God in every possible way “until there was no remedy,” judgment is come upon them ; but God reverts to His promises. Let us make a proper application of this to our own hearts. The same history is ours—always that of the fall. No sooner has God placed us in such or such a position than we immediately fail in it. But there is behind our failure a principle of strength, that is to say, the revelation of the counsels of God, and, by consequence, unconditional promises ; and we have seen (in Moses as the type), that it is the mediation and the presence of Jesus which is the accomplishment of these promises. We have also seen that God executes judgment only after extraordinary patience, after having used every possible means (however long that judgment may have been pronounced) to recall man to a sense of his duty, if there had been a spark of life in his heart ; but there was none. Individuals, quickened by grace, hold to the promises which will have their fulfilment in the manifestation of Him who can realize them, and merit the realization for others. And nothing puts these principles in clearer relief than

the history of Israel: "All these things happened unto them for types [see margin], and they are written for our admonition." It is like a mirror, in which we can see, on the one hand, the heart of man, which fails always, and on the other, the faithfulness of God who never fails, who will fulfil all His promises, and who will put forth a strength able to surmount all the wickedness of man, and the power of Satan. It is when the enmity has arrived at its height, that He says, "Make the heart of this people fat" (Isaiah vi. 10): but it is not until nearly eight hundred years after (Acts xxviii. 27), that we find the accomplishment of this judgment pronounced so long before by the prophet. It was when the people had rejected everything, that God hardened them, to make them a monument of His ways. What patience on the part of God!

And so in that which concerns us Gentiles—the execution of the judgment has been suspended for eighteen centuries, and God is still exhausting all the eternal resources of His grace to try if there be any who will listen to His testimony of salvation. As the Lord said (John xv. 22, 24), "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." Admirable patience! Infinite grace of Him who interests Himself in us, even after our rebellion and iniquity!

To Him be all the glory!

LECTURE X.

READ ISAIAH I.

SAME SUBJECT AS THE PRECEDING AND MANNER
OF ITS ACCOMPLISHMENT.

SOME passages of scripture upon the destiny of the Jews, which at our last meeting there was not time to quote, will terminate our sketch of historical prophecy concerning this people; I say historical, because prophecy is the history which God has given us of futurity.

I would again remind you of that important fact, that Jewish history is especially the manifestation of the glory of Jehovah. To ask, In what does this history concern us? is to say, Of what use is it that I should know what my Father is about to do for my brethren and the manifestation of His character in His acts?

It is evident, from the place which the subject occupies in His word, that their affairs are very dear to our God and Father, if they be not to us. It is in this people, by the ways of God revealed to them, that the character of Jehovah is fully revealed, that the nations will know Jehovah, and that we shall ourselves learn to know Him.

The same person may be king of a country, and father of a family; and this is the difference between God's acting towards us and the Jews. Towards the Church, it is the character of Father; towards the Jews, it is the character of Jehovah, the King. His faithfulness, unchangeableness, His almighty power, His government of

the whole earth—all this is revealed in His relationship towards Israel; it is in this way that the history of the people lets us into the character of Jehovah.

Psalm cxxvi. "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them." See, on the same subject, Ezekiel xxxix. 6, 7: "And I will send a fire on Magog, on them that dwell carelessly in the isles; and they shall know that I am the Lord. So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord [Jehovah], the Holy One in Israel." Verse 28: "Then shall they know that I am the Lord [Jehovah] their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen; but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there." This is the way in which Jehovah reveals Himself. The Father reveals Himself to our souls by the gospel, by the spirit of adoption; but Jehovah makes Himself known by His judgments—by the exercise of His power on the earth. I have said, that the Father reveals Himself by the gospel, because the gospel is a system of pure grace—a system which teaches us to act towards others on the principle of pure grace, as we have been acted on by the Father. It is not "eye for eye, tooth for tooth;" it is not what justice requires, the law of retaliation, or equity; but a principle according to which I ought to "be perfect, as my Father is perfect." But it will not be mere grace that is suffering evil and doing good, in the government

of Jehovah. Jehovah, without doubt, will bless the nations ; but the character of His kingdom is, that "judgment shall return unto righteousness." (Ps. xciv. 15.) At the first coming of Jesus Christ, judgment was with Pilate, and righteousness with Jesus ; but when Jesus shall return, judgment shall be united to righteousness. The people of Christ now, the children of God, ought to follow the example of the Saviour (that is, not expect or wish that judgment should be in the rigour of righteousness ; but they should be gentle and humble in the midst of all the wrongs which they suffer on the part of man). United to Christ, they are indemnified for all their wrongs in the strength of His intimate love, which comforts them by the consolations of the presence of His Spirit ; and, more than this, by the hopes of the heavenly glory. On the other hand, Jehovah will console His people by the direct acting of His righteousness in their favour (see Ps. lxxv. 5), and by re-establishing them in earthly glory.

The Jews, then, are the people by whom, and in whom, God sustains His name of Jehovah, and His character of judgment and righteousness. The Church are the people in whom, as in His family, the Father reveals His character of goodness and love.

We have already touched upon the events which will happen to the Jews in the last time, by the quotations from Jeremiah, chapters xxx. to xxxiii. ; and from Ezekiel xxxvi. to xxxix. I will now cite a few other passages to the same effect, following the order of the prophets.

Daniel xii. 1 it is the presence of him who will act for the people of Daniel, that is, for the Jewish people.

There are a few remarkable traits in this prophecy. First, God in His power, by the ministry of Michael, is to stand up for the children of Daniel's people; and it is to be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation. In this we have a clue to Matthew xxiv. and Mark xiii. 19.

The resurrection (Dan. xii. 2) applies to the Jews. "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake." You find the same expression in Isaiah xxvi.: "Thy dead shall live" and in Ezekiel xxxvii. 12. It is a figurative resurrection of the people, buried as a nation among the Gentiles. In this revival it is said of those who rise, "Some to shame and everlasting contempt." This is what will happen to the Jews. Of those brought out from among the nations, some shall enjoy eternal life, but some shall be subject to shame and everlasting contempt. (Isa. lxvi. 24.) At the time of the accomplishment of this prophecy all of Daniel's people are not brought up from among the nations.

In a word, on the one hand, God standing up for His people in a time of distress; and, on the other, a remnant delivered—such is a summary of Daniel xii.

In Hosea ii. 14 unto the end, we see that the Lord will receive Israel, will bring her into the land, after having humbled her, but having spoken to her also after His own heart, and will make her such as she was in the days of her youth; that Jehovah will make a covenant with her, and bless her in every kind of

way on this earth, and will betroth her unto Himself for ever.

But more. There is an uninterrupted chain of blessings from Jehovah Himself, down to the earthly blessings poured out in abundance upon Israel, who is the seed of God (for this is the force of the word Jezreel). On this account there is added (ver. 23), "I will sow her unto me in the earth." For Israel will become the instrument of blessing to the earth, as life from amongst the dead. At this time all is hindered by sin; spiritual wickedness is now "in heavenly places" (Eph. vi. 12); and every description of misery abounds, accompanied though it be with many blessings (for God makes "all things work together for good to them that love him"); but at that time there will be a fulness of earthly blessing.

Hosea iii. 4, 5: "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days." They shall have neither the true God nor a false god (so it is with them now); but after that they shall seek Jehovah and David—the well-beloved, or Christ.

Joel iii. 1, 16—18, 20, 21. After having spoken of the nations at the time of the return of His people from captivity (ver. 1—15), and the judgments exercised upon the Gentiles, God speaks in the latter verses of the Jews. Jerusalem is to be holy; Jehovah will dwell

in Zion; He will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel. This will be their case when the judgment of God shall fall upon the nations.

Amos ix. 14, 15: "And I will bring again the captivity of my people . . . and I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up." This is not yet accomplished.

"Verses 11, 12, of this chapter, are quoted in Acts xv., not for the purpose of shewing that the prophecy had then come to pass; but to prove that God had all along determined upon having a people from out of the Gentiles; and that, therefore, the language of the prophets agreed with that which Simon Peter had been relating of what God had done in his days. It is not the accomplishment of a prophecy, but the establishing of a principle by the mouth of the prophets, as well as by the word of the Spirit through Simon Peter.

Micah iv. 1—8. Nor is this yet brought to pass. It is, so to speak, a topographical description of Jerusalem, when her first dominion is restored. In chapter v. 4, 7, 8, the name of Christ is respected and great to the ends of the earth, Israel everywhere the dew of divine blessing, and coming off victorious against all who oppose her.

With regard to Micah, you will remark (as was observed in a former lecture) how, in chapter vii. 19, 20, the Spirit adverts to the promises made to the fathers without condition.

Zephaniah iii. 12, to the end. What language is this? God is said to be "silent [see margin] in his love;" He

is so moved that He is "silent." On whom does He lavish all this? Read verse 13: "The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies, neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth; for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid." Jehovah is in the midst of them, and nothing can disturb them.

Zechariah i. 15, 17—21. Mention is here made of the four monarchies who scattered Israel, as themselves scattered by the force of the judgments of God.

Chapter ix. 9, to the end. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee" This, you will assert, is already accomplished. No; only in part. The Holy Spirit, in the New Testament (John xii. 15), cites this passage; but with the omission of the words "He is just, and having salvation" (saving Himself, margin). Jesus, in fact, cared not for Himself. When they said to Him, mocking Him, "If thou be the Son of God come down from the cross," He took no notice. He hid not Himself from grief: far from saving Himself, He saved us; He spared not Himself that we might be spared.

Chapter x. 6, unto the end. When was it that Israel had been as "though the Lord had not cast them off?" Never.

Let us now turn to some passages which will shew that, though the people of Israel will be restored in their land, there will only be a remnant saved.

Zechariah xii. 2 mentions a time of war, even of all the people round about, the people of the earth, against

Jerusalem: but God will defend the city and its inhabitants in a miraculous manner, and the nations will be destroyed. (Ver. 9.) The spirit of grace and supplication shall be poured out upon the remnant of Israel—"all the families that *remain*;" and "they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn."

Isaiah xviii. Whatever critical difficulties exist in this chapter, its great object is too evident to be obscured by any rendering whatever. The rivers of Cush are the Nile and Euphrates.* The enemies of Israel, in the biblical part of their history, were situated on these two rivers.

There is, in this prophecy, a call made to a country which is beyond them, to a distant land, which had never, at the time of the prophecy, come into association with Israel. The prophet has then in his view some country which would later come upon the scene.

Verse 3. God bids all the inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, to take cognizance. The nations are to have their eyes upon Israel; they are summoned by God to pay attention to what was taking place as to Jerusalem; they are all interested in her fate. The

* We learn from Dr. Hales' *Analysis of Chronology*, vol. i., p. 379, that the descendants of Cush extended their settlements from Chusistan, "the land of Cush," or Susiana, on the coast of the Persian Gulf (into which the Euphrates falls), through Arabia to the Red Sea, and thence crossed into Africa beyond the Nile. The rivers of Cush may therefore well mean the Nile and Euphrates. He also makes (p. 355) the descendants of Nimrod settled in Assyria to be called Chusdim, or "Godlike Cushites." (p. 354.) [Tr.]

world is invited to watch the judgments about to take place. In the meanwhile (ver. 4), God takes His rest, and lets the nations act of themselves : Israel has returned into her land. (Vers. 5, 6.)

It is a description of Israel returning into Judæa by the help of some nation at a distance from the scene itself, which is neither Babylon nor Egypt, nor other nations who meddled in their affairs of old. We say not that it is France, or Russia, or England. The Israelites return to their land, but God takes no notice of them. Israel is abandoned to the nations ; and when everything would appear as if it were going to bear fruit (ver. 5) anew, behold the sprigs and branches cut down, and left to the fowls of the air to summer on, and to the beasts of the field to winter on (which terms are designations of the Gentiles). Nevertheless, at that time a present of this people shall be brought to the Lord of hosts, and from this people “to the place of the name of the Lord of hosts, the mount Zion.”

Psalm cxxvi. 4 : “Turn again our captivity, O Lord.” Zion and Judah will be first brought back. The captives of Zion were already brought back when this prayer was presented to God (ver. 1) ; they are but the earnest of what God will do in the restoration of all Israel.

But it is fitting, here, to touch on the manner of God’s dealing with the houses of Judah and Israel in their judgment and dispersion. The first to be gathered are those who rejected Jesus, those who were guilty of His death. The ten tribes, as such, were not guilty of this crime ; the ten tribes were dispersed before the introduction of the four monarchies into the rule of the world. It

was the Assyrians who led captive the ten tribes, before Babylon had existence as an empire. A circumstance relating to a Jewish family or tribe (Jer. xxxv. 1—10), found living in the midst of the Arabs, is related of Mr. Wolff, who visited it of late years. These Jews say of themselves, that they are descended from some who refused to return to Judæa with Ezra, because they knew that those who returned with Ezra would put the Messiah to death; and for this reason they remained where they were. Even though this be false, the existence of such a tradition is not a little wonderful. One thing is evident, that those who rejected the Christ will be subjected to the Antichrist; they will make a covenant with death, and an agreement with hell" (Isa. xxviii. 15); but their covenant will destroy all their hopes; having united themselves to Antichrist, they will undergo the consequence of this alliance, and at last will be destroyed. Two-thirds of the inhabitants will be cut off in the country of Israel itself after their return. (Zech. xiii. 8, 9.)

But with the ten tribes the occurrences are different, as we know from Ezekiel xx. 32—39. Instead of two parts cut off in the land, the rebels—that is, the disobedient and rebellious ones among them—will not enter at all into Canaan. God does with them, as He did with Israel upon their rebellion after their coming out from Egypt; He destroys them without their even seeing it.

Thus there are two classes, so to speak, of Jews in this return. First, the Jewish nation, properly speaking—namely, Judah, and those allied with her in the rejection of the true Christ: they will be in connection

with the Antichrist, and of them two-thirds will be cut off in the land. Secondly, those of the ten tribes coming up, of whom some will be cut off in the wilderness on their way into the land.

Matthew xxiii. 37—39. This prediction, delivered by Jesus Himself, gives us the assurance of the coming of Christ to restore Israel, and reign in her midst: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, your house is left unto you desolate till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

Israel will see Jesus, but it will be when this word of Psalm cxviii. 26 shall go out of her mouth. The Psalm itself gives a happy picture of her joy at that time; and out of it the Saviour drew the announcement of the judgment which He pronounced against the Jewish rulers upon their rejection of Him: “The stone, which the builders refused, is become the head stone of the corner.” Out of this Psalm, also, is drawn the joyful salutation with which the little children welcomed Him in the temple with Hosannahs—fit precursors of those who, in happier times yet to come, will receive the hearts of little children, and will confess that Saviour formerly rejected by their fathers! It is this Psalm which celebrates the exaltation and blessing of Israel—that blessing due to the faithfulness of Jehovah alone, whilst it points out the sin of the nation in rejecting “the stone” which was to become the foundation of God in Zion; but which was also, by the unbelief of that nation, the “stone of stumbling” and of judgment.

Besides these two classes of Israelites who will return

by providential agency, but still of their own free accord, the Lord after His appearance will gather together from among the Gentiles the elect of the Jewish nation, who will be yet among the nations; and this return will be accompanied with great blessing. (See Matt. xxiv. 31; compare Isa. xxvii. 12, 13, and xi. 10, 12.)

We subjoin two principles, very simple and clear, which distinguish all preceding blessings (as, for instance, the return from Babylon) from the accomplishment of the prophecies of which we have been speaking.

These two principles are—

First, That the blessings flow from the presence of Christ, Son of David.

Secondly, That they are a consequence of the new covenant.

Neither one nor the other of these conditions was fulfilled at the return from Babylon, nor has it been since.

The gospel does not occupy itself with the earthly blessings of the Jews, which is the matter of these prophecies.

LECTURE XI.

READ REVELATION XII.

SUMMING UP, AND CONCLUSION.

I HAVE read this chapter, not as professing to explain it in detail, but because it gives a summary of that which will happen at the close of this dispensation, at least the heavenly sources of these events, and the woes of the

earth.* My object this evening is to take up, in their order, the prophetic events which have been occupying us, as far as God shall give me ability.

But, beforehand, dear friends, it will not be amiss to return to a few of the thoughts which were given out at the very beginning of these lectures. Let us be reminded, in treating of these subjects, of their great end—a double one. One end is that of detaching us from the world, to which (though indeed the effect of every part of the word, when the Spirit of God is applying it) prophecy is peculiarly adapted; its tendency must be to “deliver us from this present evil age.” The other end is to make us intelligent of the character of God, and of His ways towards us. These are two precious and wholesome fruits, which spring from the acquirement of the knowledge of prophecy.

Many are the objections made to its study; it is thus that Satan always acts against the truth. I do not mean objections against such or such a view, but against the study of prophecy itself. And Satan works in this way as to the entire word of God. To one he says, Follow morality, and do not meddle with dogmas, because he knows that dogmas will free a man from his power, by the revelation of Jesus, and of the truth in their hearts. To another he suggests the neglecting of prophecy, because in it is found the judgment of this world, of which he is prince. But to allow weight to such objections, is it not to find fault with God, who has given prophecy to us, and who has even attached a

* The deliverance of the earth is found elsewhere.

particular blessing to the reading of the part reputed the most difficult ?

Prophecy throws a great light upon the dispensations of God ; and, in this sense, it does much as regards the freedom of our souls towards Him. For what hinders it more than the error so often committed, of confounding the law and the gospel, the past economies or dispensations with the existing one ?

If, in our internal fighting, we find ourselves in the presence of the law, it is impossible to find peace ; and yet if we insist on the difference which exists between the position of the saints of old, and that of the saints during the actual dispensation, this again troubles the minds of many. Now the study of prophecy clears up such points, and at the same time enlightens the faithful as to their walk and conversation ; for, whilst it always maintains free salvation by the death of Jesus, prophecy enables us to understand this entire difference between the standing of the saints now and formerly, and lights up with all the counsels of God the road along which His own people have been conducted, whether before or after the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Again, dear friends, as we have before said, it is always the hope which is presented to us which acts upon our hearts and affections. There are thus always enjoyments in prospect which stamp their actual character upon our souls. That which occupies the heart of man as hope makes the rule of his conduct. Of what vast importance is it not, then, to have our souls filled with hopes according to God ! Persons say it is the idle curiosity of prying into hidden things ; but if it were true that we

ought not to look into prophecy, the conclusion is inevitable, that our thoughts are not to go beyond the present. The way of knowing what God's intentions are for the future is certainly the study of that prophecy which He has given to us. Prophecy records things to come ; it is the scriptural mirror, wherein future events are seen. If we refuse the study of what God has revealed as to come, we are necessarily left to our own ideas upon it.

The famous passage of St. Paul has been quoted to some here (1 Cor. ii. 2) : " I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." It is constantly used as an objection against the study of what is found revealed in the word. This arises from two causes. The one is due to that prolific source of error, namely, the citation of a passage without examining the context ; the other, alas ! arises from a greater or less want of uprightness—from a desire (unrecognized, it may be, in our own deceitful hearts) of standing still in the ways of the Lord, by making as little acquaintance with them as may be. It is not true that we are to limit ourselves to the knowledge of Jesus Christ crucified. We must also know Jesus Christ glorified, Jesus Christ at the right hand of God ; we must know Him as High Priest ; as Advocate with the Father. We ought to know Jesus Christ as much as possible, and not be content with saying, " Jesus Christ, and him crucified." So to say is to take the letter of the word and abuse it. The apostle, seeing the tendency that there was in the Church at Corinth to follow rather

the learning and philosophy of man than Christ (a thing not to be wondered at in a city renowned for science), points out, in leading their souls back to Christ, how foreign his entry among them was from earthly wisdom. He "was with them in weakness and fear ; his speech and his preaching were not with enticing words of man's wisdom ;" "he determined not to know anything among them but Jesus Christ, and him crucified" — Jesus Christ, and even Christ as the despised one among men. He is not speaking of the value of the blood, but of the condition of Christ Himself, in order to bring down, by the cross, all their vain glory, and found their faith upon the word of God, and not on human wisdom. But in the same chapter he says, that from the moment he comes into the midst of true Christians, his conduct changes ; he speaks "wisdom among them that are perfect." He would have nothing to do with human wisdom ; but as soon as he finds himself among the perfect ones, he says, "We speak wisdom among them that are perfect." Desiring to confine ourselves to Jesus crucified, in the way it is urged, is, I repeat, to confine ourselves to as little as possible of Christianity. In Hebrews vi. the apostle says, he is unwilling to do what they would make him say in this place ; he altogether condemns that which is urged upon us. "Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ," says he, "let us go on unto perfection."

After these observations on the study of prophecy in general, I proceed to recall, in a few words, how God has revealed Himself by it.

Revelation xii. presents to us the great object of prophecy, and of all the word of God, that is, the combat which takes place between the Second Adam and Satan. It is from this centre of truth that all the light which is found in scripture radiates.

This great combat may take place either for the earthly things (they being the object), and then it is in the Jews ; or for the Church (that being the object), and then it is in the heavenly places.

It is on this account that the subject of prophecy divides itself into two parts : the hopes of the Church, and those of the Jews ; though the former be scarcely, properly speaking, prophecy, which concerns the earth and God's government of it.

But before coming to this great crisis, namely the combat between Satan and the Second Adam, it was necessary that the history of the first Adam should be developed. This has been done. And in order that the Church, that is, Christians, may be in a position to occupy themselves with the things of God, it was needful, first of all, that they should be in happy certainty as to their own position before Him. At His first coming, Christ accomplished all the work which the wisdom of the Father, in the eternal counsels of God, had confided to Him ; this effected the peace of the Church. The Lord Jesus came, in order that the certainty of salvation, by the knowledge of the grace of God, should be introduced into the world, that is, into the hearts of the faithful. After having accomplished salvation, He communicates it to His followers in giving them life. His Holy Spirit, which is the seal of this salvation in the heart,

reveals to them things to come, as to the children of the family and heirs of the family estate. During the period which separates the first coming of the Lord from the second, the Church is gathered by the action of the Holy Spirit to have part in the glory of Christ at His return.

These, in a few words, are the two great subjects which I have been opening; namely, that Christ, having done all that is needful for the salvation of the Church—having saved all those who believe, the Holy Ghost now acts in the world to communicate to the Church the knowledge of this salvation. He does not come to propose the hope that God will be good, but a fact—that fact, once more, that Jesus has already accomplished the salvation of all those who believe; and when the Holy Spirit communicates this knowledge to a soul, it knows that it is saved. Being then put in relationship with God as His children, we are His heirs, “heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.” All that concerns the glory of Christ belongs to us, and the Holy Spirit is given to us, in the first place, to make us understand that we are children of God. He is a Spirit of adoption, but more, a Spirit of light, who teaches the children of God what their inheritance is. As they are one with Christ, all the truth of His glory is revealed to them, and the supremacy which He has over all things, God having also constituted Him heir of all things, and us co-heirs.

After Christ has fulfilled all that was necessary, the Church, until the second coming of its Saviour, is taken from out of all nations, and united to Him. It has,

whilst here below, the knowledge of the salvation which He has accomplished, and of the coming glory, the Holy Spirit, in those who believe, being the seal of salvation accomplished, and the earnest of the future glory.

These truths throw a great light upon the entire history of man. But let us ever remember that the great object of the Bible is the conflict between Christ, the Second Adam, and Satan.

In what condition did Christ find the first Adam? In a condition into the lowest depths of which He was obliged to enter, as responsible head of all creation. He found man in a state of ruin—entirely lost. It was needful that this should be unfolded before the coming of Christ; for God did not introduce His Son into the world as Saviour until all that was necessary to shew that man was in himself incapable of anything good was brought out. The whole state of man, before and after the deluge, under the law, under the prophets, only served as a clearer attestation that man was lost. He had failed throughout, under every possible circumstance, until, God having sent His Son, the servants said, “This is the heir; let us kill him.” The measure of sin was then at its height; the grace of God then did also much more abound, and gave us the inheritance—us poor sinners, the inheritance with Christ in the heavenly glory, of which we possess the earnest, having Christ in spirit here below.

But (to enter a little more into the succession of dispensations, and also into that which concerns the character of God in this respect) the first thing which

we would remark is the deluge, because until then there had not been, so to speak, government in the world. The prophecy which existed before the deluge was to this effect, that Christ was to come. The teachings of God were ever to this end: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints."

Let us pass on.

In Noah's time there was government of the earth, and God coming in judgment and committing the right of the sword to man.

After this comes the call of Abraham. Mark: the principle of government is not put forward by the word, but the principle of promise, and the call to be in relationship with God, of that one person who becomes the root of all the promises of God—Abraham, the father of the faithful. God calls him, makes him quit his country, his family, bidding him go into a country which He would shew him. God reveals Himself to him as the God of promise, who separates a people to Himself by a promise which He gives them. It is at this epoch that God revealed Himself under the name of God Almighty.

After that, among the descendants of Abraham, by this same principle of election, God takes the children of Jacob to be His people here below—the object of all His earthly care, and out of whose midst Christ was to come according to the flesh. It is in this people of Israel that God displays all His characters as Jehovah; it is not only as a God of promise, but it is a God who unites the two principles of calling and government, which two

had been each successively brought out in Noah and in Abraham. Israel was the called, separated people—separated indeed only to earthly blessings, and to enjoy the promise; but, at the same time, to be subject to the exercise of the government of God according to the law.

We say then, that in Noah was marked the principle of government of the earth, and in Abraham that of calling and election; and so Jehovah will accomplish all that He has said as God of promise, “who was, and is, and is to come,” and govern all the earth, according to the righteousness of His law—the righteousness revealed in Israel.

We have shewn that God (Ex. xix. 4–9) made the accomplishment of the promises, in those times, to depend upon the faithfulness of man, and that He took occasion to prove Him, and to represent in detail, as in a picture, all the characters under which He acted towards him. It was this which He was doing under priests, prophets, and kings. And it is to be particularly observed, that the bearing of prophecy, in the unfolding of this succession of relationships of God with Israel, and with man, is not alone the manifestation of the fall of man, but also, and chiefly, of the glory of God.

When Israel had transgressed in every possible way and circumstance, even in the family of David, which was the last human resource of the nation—at the moment that family failed in Ahaz, prophecy commences in all its details, having these two features: one, the manifestation of the glory of Christ, in order fully to shew that the people had failed under the law; the other,

the manifestation of the coming glory of Christ, to be the support of the faith of those who were desiring to keep the law, but who saw that everything was out of course.

It is too late to take an interest in the prophecies when they are fulfilled. Those to whom at the actual time the prophets addressed themselves, were the people from whom submission was expected. The word of God should have touched their conscience. It ought to be so with us. In the midst of all this, however, were predictions which announced that the Messiah was to come, and to suffer for ends most important.

Prophecy applies itself properly to the earth ; its object is not heaven. It was about things that were to happen on the earth ; and the not seeing this has misled the Church. We have thought that we ourselves had within us the accomplishment of these earthly blessings, whereas we are called to enjoy heavenly blessings. The privilege of the Church is to have its portion in the heavenly places ; and later blessings will be shed forth upon the earthly people. The Church is something altogether apart—a kind of heavenly economy, during the rejection of the earthly people, who are put aside on account of their sins, and driven out among the nations, out of the midst of which nations God chooses a people for the enjoyment of heavenly glory with Jesus Himself. The Lord, having been rejected by the Jewish people, is become wholly a heavenly person. This is the doctrine which we peculiarly find in the writings of the apostle Paul. It is no longer the Messiah of the Jews, but a Christ exalted, glorified ; and it is for want of taking

hold of this exhilarating truth, that the Church has become so weak.

Having thus briefly retraced the history of the different dispensations, it remains for us now to see the Church glorified, but without the Lord Jesus having abandoned any of His rights upon the earth. He was the Heir: He was to shed His blood, which was to ransom the inheritance. As Boaz said (whose name signifies, In him is strength), "What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth, the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance." (Ruth iv. 5.) So it was necessary that Christ should buy the Church, co-heir by grace (as Boaz, type of Christ, bought the inheritance by taking to wife Ruth) to whom the inheritance had devolved in the decrees of Jehovah.*

Christ then, and the Church, have title to the inheritance, that is, to all that Christ Himself has created as God. But what is the state of the Church actually? Does it actually inherit these things? Not any; because until we are in the glory we can have nothing, possess nothing, except only "the Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession." Until that time Satan is the prince of this world, the god of this world; he accuses even the children of God in the heavenly places, which, however, he occupies only by usurpation (the

* This is true in principle; but Ruth, as a figure, applies more directly to the remnant of Israel, brought in under grace.

way being made to him by the passions of men and the power which he exercises over the creature, fallen, and at a distance from God, although, definitively, the providence of God uses all to the accomplishment of His counsels).

And now, dear friends, having contemplated the rights of Christ and of the Church, let us consider how Christ will make them good. The consideration of this will lead us into the discovery, in their order, of the accomplishment of events at the close. Perhaps, however, having arrived thus far, it would be better (as I have only been speaking of the Jews (to turn for a moment to the Gentiles).

We have remarked that, when the fall of the Jewish nation was complete, God transferred the right of government to the Gentiles; but with this difference, that this right was separated from the calling and the promise of God. In the Jews, the two things were united, namely, the calling of God, and government upon the earth, which became distinct things from the moment that Israel was put aside. In Noah and Abraham we had them distinct; government in the one, calling in the other.

With the Jews these principles were united; but Israel failed, and ceased thenceforward to be capable of manifesting the principle of the government of God, because God in Israel acted in righteousness; and unrighteous Israel could no longer be the depository of the power of God. God, then, quitted His terrestrial throne in Israel. Notwithstanding this, as to the earthly calling, Israel continued to be the called people: "for

the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." As to government, God transports it where He will; and it went to the Gentiles. There are, indeed, the called from among the nations (namely, the Church), but it is for the heavens they are called. The calling of God for the earth is never transferred to the nations; it remains with the Jews. If I want an earthly religion, I ought to be a Jew. From the instant that the Church loses sight of its heavenly calling, it loses, humanly speaking, all.

What has happened to the nations by their having had government given over to them? They have become "beasts:" so the four great monarchies are called. Once the government is transferred to the Gentiles, they become the oppressors of the people of God: first, the Babylonians; secondly, the Medes and Persians; thirdly, the Greeks; then, the Romans. The fourth monarchy consummated its crime at the same instant that the Jews consummated theirs, in being accessory, in the person of Pontius Pilate, to the will of a rebellious nation, by killing Him who was at once the Son of God and King of Israel. Gentile power is in a fallen state, even as the called people, the Jews, are. Judgment is written upon power and calling, as in man's hand.

In the meanwhile, what happens? First, the salvation of the Church. The iniquity of Jacob, the crime of the nations, the judgment of the world, and that of the Jews—all this becomes salvation to the Church. It was accomplished all in the death of Jesus. Secondly, all that has passed since that stupendous event has no other object than the gathering together of the children of God.

The Jews, the called people, have become rebellious, and are driven away from the presence of God; the nations are become equally rebellious; but government is always there—in a state of ruin indeed; but the patience of God is always there, also waiting until the end. Then what takes place?

The Church goes to join the Lord in the heavenly places.

Let us now suppose that, in the time decreed by God, all the Church is assembled; what will happen? It will go immediately to meet the Lord, and the marriage of the Lamb will take place. Salvation will be consummated in the seat of the glory itself—in the heavenly places. Where will the nations be? The government of the fourth monarchy will be still in existence, but under the influence and direction of Antichrist; and the Jews will unite themselves to him, in a state of rebellion, to make war with the Lamb. Why all this? and why has not the gospel hindered such a state of things? Because Satan, unto this hour, has not been driven out of the heavenly places, and, by consequence, all that God has done here for man has been spoiled—whether government of the Gentiles, or the actual relationship of the Jews with God. All has been deteriorated by the presence of Satan, always there exercising his baneful influence.

But God now, at the close, when the Church is gathered and called up on high, takes things into His own hand. What will He do? Dispossess Satan—drive him from power. It is what Jesus will do when the Church shall be manifestly united to Him, and He

begins to act to restore everything into its proper order.

Dear friends, as soon as the Church shall be received to Christ, there will follow the battle in heaven, in order that the seat of government may be purged of those fertile sources, and of those active agents, of the ills of humanity, and of all creation. The result of such a combat is easily foreseen: Satan will be expelled from heaven, without being yet bound; but he will be cast down to earth, "having great wrath, because he knoweth he hath but a short time." Thenceforward, power will be established in heaven according to the intention of God. But on the earth it will be quite otherwise; for when Satan is driven away from heaven, he will excite the whole earth, and will raise up in particular the apostate part of it, which has revolted against the power of Christ coming from heaven. It is said, "Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea. . . ."

Behold, then, the created heavens occupied by Christ and His Church; and Satan in great wrath upon the earth, having but a short time. Under the conduct of Antichrist, the fourth monarchy will become the sphere upon which the activity of Satan will then be displayed, who will unite the Jews with this apostate prince against heaven. I do not enter upon the scriptural proofs here—they have been already spoken of; I merely sum up the facts in the order of their accomplishment. It need scarcely be said that the result of all this will be the judgment and destruction of the beast and Antichrist, the heads of evil among the Gentiles and among the

Jews, the secular and spiritual heads of mischief and rebellion on the earth. Jesus Christ will destroy, in the person of Antichrist, the power of Satan in that government, which we have seen was confided to the Gentiles. This wicked one, having joined himself to the Jews, and having placed himself at Jerusalem, as the centre of government of the earth, will be destroyed by the coming of the Lord of lords and King of kings; and Christ will anew occupy this chief seat of government, which will become the place of the throne of God on the earth. But although the Lord is come to the earth, and the power of Satan in Antichrist is destroyed, and the government established in the hands of the Righteous One, the earth will not be reduced under His sceptre. The remnant of the Jews is delivered, and Antichrist destroyed; but the world, not yet acknowledging the rights of Christ, will desire to possess His heritage; and the Saviour must clear the land, in order that its inhabitants may enjoy the blessings of His reign without interruption or hindrance, and that joy and glory may be established in this world, so long subjected to the enemy.

The first thing, then, which the Lord will do will be to purify His land (the land which belongs to the Jews) of the Tyrians, the Philistines, the Sidonians; of Edom, and Moab, and Ammon—of all the wicked, in short, from the Nile to the Euphrates. It will be done by the power of Christ in favour of His people re-established by His goodness. The people are put into security in the land, and then will those of them who remain till that time among the nations be gathered together.

When the people are living thus in peace, another enemy will come up, namely, Gog ; but he will come only for his destruction.

It would seem that in those times—probably at the commencement of this period—besides the personal manifestation of Christ in judgment, there will be a discovery much more calm, much more intimate, of the Lord Jesus to the Jews. This is what will take place when He will descend on the Mount of Olives, where “his feet shall stand,” according to the expression of Zechariah xiv. 3, 4. It is always the same Jesus ; but He will reveal Himself peaceably, and shew Himself, not as the Christ from heaven, but as the Messiah of the Jews.

Blessing to the Gentiles will be the consequence of the restoration of the Jews, and of the presence of the Lord. The Church will have been blessed ; the apostasy of the fourth monarchy will no longer have existence ; the wicked one will be cut off, as well as the unbelieving Israelites ; in fine, the land of the Jews will be at peace.

Afterwards there will be the world to come, prepared and introduced by these judgments, and by the presence of the Lord, who will take the place of wickedness and the wicked one. Those who shall have seen the glory manifested in Jerusalem will go and announce its arrival to the other nations. These will submit themselves to Christ ; they will confess the Jews to be the people blessed of their Anointed, will bring the rest of them back into their land, and will themselves become the theatre of glory, which, with Jerusalem as its centre, will extend

itself in blessing wherever there is man to enjoy its effects. The witness of the glory being spread everywhere, the hearts of men, full of goodwill, submit themselves to the counsels and glory of God in response to this testimony. All the promises of God being accomplished, and the throne of God being established at Jerusalem, this throne will become to the whole earth the source of happiness. The re-establishment of the people of God will be to the world "as life from the dead."

One thing is to be added, namely, that at this time Satan will be bound, and in consequence the blessing will be without interruption until "he is loosed for a short season." Instead of the adversary in the heavenly places ; instead of his government, the seat of which is now in the air ; instead of that confusion and misery which he produces, as much as is allowed him to do ; Christ and His Church will be there, the source and instrument of blessing ever new. Government in the heavenly places will be the security, and not the hindrance, or the compulsory instrument, of the goodness of God. The glorified Church—witness for all, even by its state, of the extent of the love of the Father, who has fulfilled all His promises, and has been better to our weak hearts than even their hopes—will fill the heavenly places with its own joy ; and in its service will constitute the happiness of the world, towards which it will be the instrument of the grace which it shall be richly enjoying. Behold the heavenly Jerusalem, witness in glory of the grace which has placed her so high ! In the midst of her shall flow the river of water of life, where grows the

tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the Gentiles; for even in the glory shall be preserved to her this sweet character of grace. Meanwhile, upon the earth, is the earthly Jerusalem, the centre of the government, and of the reign of the righteousness of Jehovah her God; as indeed in a state of desolation she had been of His justice, she will be the place of His throne—the centre of the exercise of that justice described in such language as “The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish.” For in that state of terrestrial glory—though indeed placed there by the grace of the new covenant—this city will still preserve its normal character, that she may be witness of the character of Jehovah, as the Church is of that of the Father. God also will realize the full force of that name—“The most high God, possessor of the heavens and the earth;” and Christ will fulfil, in all their fulness, all the functions of High Priest, after the order of Melchizedek, who, after the victory gained over the enemies of God’s people, blessed their God on the part of the people, and the people on the part of God. (Gen. xiv. 18, &c.)

Dear friends, you will understand that there is an infinity of details into which I have not entered; for example, the circumstance of the Jews who will be persecuted during the troublous times in Judea, of which we have some instruction in the word. This general sketch will engage you to read the word of God for yourselves on the whole subject. For myself, I attach more importance to the larger features of prophecy; and for this reason, that there is to be found in

them, on the one hand, the distinctions of dispensations, which become, by the consideration of these truths, very clear ; and on the other, the character of God, which is in this manner fully unveiled. However this may be, there is nothing to hinder your study of prophecy, even in its minute details. If, indeed, we attempt the examination of the works of man in this way, an abundance of imperfection is found ; but it is the contrary in the works of God. The more we enter into their minute details, the more does perfection appear.

May God perfect in you, and in all His children, this separation from the world, which ought to be, before God, the fruit of the expectation of the Church, at the discovery of these its heavenly blessings in store, and of the terrible judgments which await all that which still binds man to this lower world ; for the judgment will come upon all these earthly things ! May God also perfect the desires of my heart, and the witness of the Holy Spirit !



